

Caring and Respect in Preschool Classrooms:  
Connecting Ethical Theory to Empirical Research

by

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## ABSTRACT

This study focuses on the principles of caring and respect for persons, and how they are manifested in the preschool classroom. Caring and respect are core ethical principles. When applied, they inform our thinking and guide our behavior. Leading ethicists, including Immanuel Kant and Nel Noddings, have argued that caring and respect are vital elements in ethical human relationships. This dissertation is at the forefront of a new line of inquiry which is seeking to connect the philosophical with the empirical in ways that can be illuminating for both, and for education research and practice more generally. The study connects ethical theory with a qualitative analysis of how the principles of caring and respect do and do not manifest in pre-K classrooms. The empirical portion of this study is a secondary data analysis of classroom videos collected for a large-scale research project conducted by the National Center for Research on Early Childhood Education (NCRECE). Using maximum variation sampling, I identified six preschool classrooms to examine in regard to my research questions and identify observable behaviors associated with caring and respectful interactions. These video samples of teachers interactions with small and larger groups of children were then transcribed, described, analyzed, and discussed through the lens of the ethics of care and respect for persons. The study found that caring and respect for persons were either not demonstrated or were demonstrated in very limited ways in the observable behaviors of teachers in the samples of preschool classrooms under examination. These findings point to the importance of connecting ethics and practice in educational research and the professional development of early childhood educators.

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

*The young should be treated with respect.*

-Chinese proverb

### **Personal Experiences Leading to Interest in Research Topic**

I only have one memory of preschool. Our activity that day was dipping our hands and feet in paint, and creating prints to take home to our parents. But I encountered a problem. I'd come to school in a dress and tights, so I was told I needed to take my tights off. As a 3 ½ year old, I wasn't coordinated enough to remove them without pulling up my dress, which I didn't want to do in front of everyone. Unfortunately, my request to go to the bathroom was denied. I was forced, with tears streaming down my face, to lift up my dress and remove my tights in front of the entire class.

Most of the kids probably went home with adorable footprints and happy faces to share what they'd done with their parents at the end of that day. I went home with an intense feeling of humiliation that has lasted a lifetime. My memories of my pre-K, elementary, and secondary schooling aren't all negative. But the images that stand out the most are, and sadly, they're numerous. In first grade, my art teachers told me that my drawing of the tranquil sky around my house looked like a hurricane. Art became my most hated subject. In second grade, I was reprimanded for acting up in class and my punishment was spending the day "helping out" in the special needs classroom. In a third grade classroom not far from mine, my brother, who suffered from asthma, was told by

his laughing teacher that he sounded like Darth Vader. She said she hoped her soon-to-be born son didn't have his breathing problems—she then continued around the room and told each student which terrible trait they possessed that she hoped her son wouldn't have.

In sixth grade, it took me too long to locate my math homework in my disorganized notebook, so I was called up to the front of the room with the other kids who'd neglected to do theirs. We were lined up in a row with our arms straight out to the sides, and heavy textbooks placed on each hand. We were told to keep our arms straight and stand there for five minutes, but it didn't take long for the burning sensations to start traveling down our arms. The other kids compensated by bending at the elbows—I tried to keep mine straight and so the books ended up falling to the ground. At the end of the five minutes, the other kids were told to sit down, but because I'd "cheated," I had to suffer the punishment for five more minutes. My arms were in agony for over a week afterwards. The teacher who prescribed this punishment had been recognized as a National Student Teacher of the Year the year before.

### **What I Want to Understand**

I didn't attend the worst schools in America, as you may be thinking. In fact, my public school system has consistently been ranked as one of the best in the country—in 2014, my Ohio high school was rated second in the state, and 110<sup>th</sup> in the nation ("Best High Schools," 2014). If these were my experiences at one of the top-ranked schools in the country, what were other kids having to endure in less privileged places? This led me to wonder whether the types of unethical interactions I experienced were uncommon, or



whether they were no different from what children encounter in every school, in every community, across the United States.

In college, I systematically challenged everything I'd been taught to believe through the studies of various disciplines—psychology, philosophy, religion, sociology, and art. I learned to question, criticize, and deconstruct. I graduated from college with the complete demolition of ingrained values, beliefs, and knowledge, and a lot of chaos and debris in my mind. Most of all, I emerged with an authentic, albeit postmodern sense of self and for the first time, intellectual integrity. It would take a couple years for the dust to clear and my new vision to emerge, but indeed it did.

In my master's program in philosophy and anthropology of education at the University of Vermont, I studied ethics and education in the pursuit of my own understanding and articulation of a good society—and the educational vision that might make this ideal possible. My primary research interest throughout this time was moral culture and education, and I continued to explore this topic in my master's thesis. This study examined and critiqued traditional definitions of moral education, most notably the character education movement. I then reconceptualized notions of morality and schooling to include a comprehensive vision of a caring, respectful, democratic school culture. I examined theoretical and practical elements of the democratic ethic and the ethic of care in two K-12 schools in the form of ethnographic case studies.

When I graduated I thirsted for practical experience. Was my dream simply a delusion? Was it realistic to think that people could live and work together in a loving, just, and sustainable community? Would it be possible to put my newfound vision for

education and society into practice? I moved down to the mountains of Western North Carolina to continue my inquiry and explorations.

For the next three years, I served as an administrator, teacher, and houseparent in a Quaker, consensus-based, community-oriented, non-profit middle school in the remote mountains of Western North Carolina. Working at the Arthur Morgan School breathed new life into the skeleton of my vision. Our school community was committed to a non-violent, respectful, ecologically sound way of life. In this context we cared for and educated ourselves and our students to become critically-minded, socially aware, peaceful, caring, rational, and constructive members of our society. We learned and taught about how to make the world a better place, both locally and globally. We bettered ourselves and our community in the process.

Equipped with these new experiences and perspectives, I returned to the university setting to pursue the doctoral degree that led to this dissertation, concentrating on coursework in childhood studies and qualitative research.

### **Professional Experiences Leading to Interest in Research Topic**

In 2008, I worked as a researcher on a mixed-methods pilot study at the University of Virginia's Center for Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning. The study included observations of four pre-K Head Start programs, and included the CLASS measure (Pianta, 2008) as one of its research instruments. I became certified (reliable) on the CLASS measure at that time (both the pre-K and K-3 measures). Since then, the CLASS authors founded an educational company called Teachstone to develop CLASS-based programs and expand offerings for additional age levels. I began working at

Teachstone in 2009, and since that time, have become reliable on the CLASS infant, toddler, and upper elementary measures, in addition to maintaining certification on pre-K and K-3. Over the course of my employment, I've coded hundreds of classrooms using the CLASS tools, and estimate that I've watched well over a thousand hours of pre-K footage. In addition, I serve as a master coder, coach would-be observers on how to become reliable, and work with teachers to improve their interactions with children in the classroom across the three CLASS domains.

In my four years working with the CLASS and coding pre-K classrooms, I've discovered that the CLASS domain of Emotional Support (Pianta et al, 2008) captures many of the characteristics I believe to be essential to the concepts of caring and respect. My passion for educational reform stems from my desire to ensure that children in U.S. schools, as children everywhere, are treated ethically. It is these experiences that led me to pursue my research topic.

### **Overview of Study**

This study focuses on the principles of caring and respect, and how they might best be practiced in the early childhood classroom. Caring and respect are core ethical principles. When applied, they inform our thinking and guide our behavior. Leading ethicists such as Immanuel Kant (1785/1993) have argued that caring and respect are vital elements in ethical human relationships. This work has informed the development of modern moral and educational theories from Piaget to Noddings (Piaget, 1997/1932; Kohlberg, 1981; Gilligan, 1982; Noddings, 1984). This study explores why caring and respect are important, and how they can be practiced in classroom interactions. It also

demonstrates the effects that a lack of caring and respect has on the social-emotional climate of schools.

I begin with the core premise that ethics is important to the study of human behavior. There is an important distinction to be made between “ethics” as studied empirically by social scientists, and “ethics” as a form of normative inquiry practiced by moral philosophers and other ethicists. The former consists of the experimental and observational study and analysis of human psychological processes and behaviors that are categorized as having some sort of “moral” content; i.e., relating to moral categories such as right and wrong, just and unjust, good and bad, etc. The latter consists of philosophical arguments concerning the nature of ethics itself (meta-ethics), and the rational basis for ethical decision-making (normative ethics). This dissertation is at the forefront of a new line of inquiry which is seeking to connect the philosophical with the empirical in ways that can be illuminating for both, and for education research and practice more generally. My research connects ethical theory with a qualitative analysis of how the principles of caring and respect do and do not manifest in pre-K classrooms. The research questions that stem from this framework include:

- What are caring and respect? (theoretical)
- What teacher behaviors are associated with treating others with caring and respect?

The empirical portion of this project will examine observable behaviors associated with caring and respectful interactions. The table below lists examples of types of behaviors that I looked for during my video observation. These categories emerged from a review

of the literature (Kant, 1785/1993; Noddings, 1984; Pianta et al, 2008) and include behaviors derived from philosophical analysis (Kant and Noddings) as well as empirical data (Pianta et al, 2005; Pianta et al, 2008). This type of categorical schema is well-documented in research on the CLASS instrument (Pianta et al, 2005; Pianta et al, 2008), and the behaviors listed below are adapted from the Emotional Support domains of the CLASS framework<sup>1</sup> (Pianta et al, 2008).

<b>Interactions Indicative of Caring and Respect</b>	<b>Interactions Indicative of a Lack of Caring and Respect</b>
Paying attention to children (listening, observing)	Ignoring children's words, questions, or bids for attention
Being honest	Lying; withholding relevant information
Being fair	Cheating; inconsistently enforcing classroom expectations, punishing or rewarding children without a clear, consistent rationale
Setting logical consequences for misbehavior	Engaging in punitive control
Framing classroom rules in the positive and explaining the rationale for them	Bullying children
Using kind language	Using unkind language
Speaking in a warm, calm tone	Using a harsh or irritated tone of voice, yelling
Asking follow-up questions about a child's ideas	Humiliating children
Showing interest in children's desires and feelings	Treating children as objects to be manipulated

Figure 1.1 (Adapted from Pianta et al, 2008)

This study is a secondary data analysis of classroom videos collected for a large-scale research project conducted by the National Center for Research on Early Childhood

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<sup>1</sup> See Chapter 2.

Education (NCRECE). Using maximum variation sampling, I identify six classrooms to examine in regard to my research questions. These video samplings will be transcribed, described, analyzed, and discussed through the lens of the ethics of care and respect. This study may be useful for educational researchers exploring ways to better connect ethical theories to empirical studies, or professional development educators who strive to create more caring and respectful interactions in early childhood classrooms.

The dissertation is comprised of introductory chapters focused on a review of the literature and methods, followed by presentation of the data, and final analyses/conclusion.

## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE: FROM KANT TO NODDINGS

My dissertation study focuses on the concepts of caring and respect for persons in early childhood classrooms. It takes the exploration of two ethical principles, caring and respect for persons, derived from the field of moral philosophy, and applies them to empirical education research, employing qualitative analysis of video data. In this chapter, I review pertinent literature from the fields of moral philosophy, moral psychology, and education. In the realm of moral philosophy, Kantian ethics and the ethic of care are often seen as diametrically opposed (Clement, 1996; Gilligan, 1982; Held, 2006; Noddings, 1984). I do not believe that this is the case, and through this study, seek to show how both theories contribute complementary and critical insights that lead to a richer understanding of morality in the classroom.

In this chapter, I trace the development of the principle of respect for persons from Immanuel Kant – its original architect – and describe how this principle influenced the work of moral psychologists Piaget, Kohlberg, and Gilligan. I then describe how these theories of moral development and moral education influenced the work of Nel Noddings and the development of the ethics of care.

These moral theories and principles will then be used in Chapter 3 to develop categories for the empirical evaluation of respect for persons as operationalized in early childhood classroom settings. Chapter 3 will also include a discussion of the ethnographic and qualitative studies which have made relevant contributions to interdisciplinary research in the area of ethics and education.

## **Kant and Deontological Ethics**

Immanuel Kant was a Prussian philosopher who lived from 1724 to 1804. He served as a lecturer and professor at the University of Königsberg, and it was there that he developed the ideas of his critical philosophy. Kant was in his time, and remains today, a leading figure in many branches of philosophy, including metaphysics, aesthetics, ethics, political philosophy, epistemology, and logic (Kant, 1785/1993, 1787/1998, 1788/2004, 1790/2007, 1793/1960, 1797/1996, 1797/1965). He was the author of many influential books, including the *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals* (1785/1993), *The Critique of Pure Reason* (1787/1998), *The Critique of Judgment* (1790/2007), *The Critique of Practical Reason* (1788/2004), *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone* (1793/1960), and *Metaphysics of Morals* (1797/1996).

In his moral philosophy, Kant is recognized as the father of deontology. From deontology, modern ethicists derive many of the basic principles (e.g., autonomy, respect for persons, and informed consent) that inform current discussions in fields such as medicine, law, and scientific research (Kant, 1785/1993, 1788/2004, 1797/1996). Kant's critique of metaphysics forever changed scholarly discussions in theology and religious studies, rendering meaningless many religious claims to "supernatural" sources of knowledge that lie beyond the realm of possible experience or cognition (Kant, 1787/1998, 1793/1960). Kant's epistemology changed the way we think about the nature of our experience, the relationship between objects and our understanding, and the limits of knowledge (Kant 1787/1998, 1790/2007).

Deontology is an ethical theory that holds that the rightness or wrongness of an



action is to be determined by the degree to which it adheres to rational principles (Kant 1785/1993). The supreme rational principle of moral action, according to Kant, is the categorical imperative (Kant, 1785/1993, pp. 13-15; Strike and Soltis, 2004, pp. 14-17; Rachels, 2003, pp. 120-133). The categorical imperative is a test that judges the moral worth of every action: if I were to act in this way in every similar circumstance, would it be morally sound? If the answer is yes, then according to Kant, the action is morally obligatory. If the answer is no, then it is not (Beauchamp, 2008, p. 57; Kant, 1785/1993, p. 15; Rachels, 2003, pp. 120-133; Strike and Soltis, 2004, pp. 14-17).

For Kant, the only human quality that could be regarded as inherently good is a good *will*: “There is no possibility of thinking of anything at all in the world, or even out of it, which can be regarded as good without qualification, except a *good will*” (Kant, 1785/1993, p. 7). Kant defined the will as not simply a wish, but an intentional evocation of all the means in our power to bring something to fruition (Kant, 1785/1993, p. 8). A good will, then, acts in accordance with reason and the moral law, not because it is motivated by desire to achieve some end. Kantian ethics (i.e., deontology) centers on respect for duty—the duty to act in accordance with reason and the categorical imperative. The categorical imperative is a test that judges the moral worth of every action: if I and other humans were to act in this way in every like circumstance, would it be morally sound? Can I will that this act become universalized, that it become a universal law? If the answer is yes, then according to Kant, the action is morally obligatory. If the answer is no, then it is not a moral action (Beauchamp, 2008, p. 57; Kant, 1785/1993). According to Kant, respect is an intentional act, a choice. It is not a

“natural” phenomenon—something that exists in its own right—nor is it accidental (Kant, 1785/1993). In this sense, Kant’s notion of morality consists in doing the right thing for the right reasons, based on principles grounded in reason and nothing else (e.g., experience, feeling, or desire) (Kant, 1785/1993).

### **Kant and the Principle of Respect for Persons**

Kant’s concept of *respect for persons* followed from his understanding of respect for duty. Respect for persons is respect for another human’s capacity to make their own autonomous choices—to freely choose rational, moral action (Kant, 1785/1993; Rachels, 2003, pp. 120-133; Strike and Soltis, 2004, pp. 14-17). Respect for another’s capacity for rational thought and action does not mean the other will necessarily act rationally. It is merely that person’s potential capacity for rationality that entitles them to respect (Kant, 1785/1993).

Why does respect for persons have innate worth or value? Because, according to Kant, it is grounded in reason, and it constitutes the condition under which a being can be an end in itself (Kant, 1785/1993, p. 40). Kant explained that human needs (e.g. food) have a market value—they are important insofar as they meet that human need. For example, food has worth insofar as it provides nourishment and ensures survival. Delights (such as enjoyment of the arts, or the intellect) have affective worth—in other words, they have value insofar as they enrich one’s emotional state (Kant, 1785/1993, p. 40). It is reason alone, according to Kant, that has intrinsic value. Thus, respect is not

valued because it has instrumental value (although it may have this too), but is valuable in itself.

How might Kant's notion of respect for persons inform classroom practice and research? First, treating children with respect means treating them as ends in themselves. Teachers may choose to treat children with respect because doing so leads to better academic or social-emotional outcomes, but they *ought* to treat children with respect, in the moral sense, because it is the rational and therefore ethical thing to do, regardless of outcomes (Kant, 1785/1993, pp. 40-41).

Second, respect for persons, according to Kant, does not require reciprocity. In other words, we ought to treat others with respect—as ends in themselves—whether or not they reciprocate, and regardless of whether their lack of respect is due to their choice or because they lack the capacity (Kant, 1785/1993). Treating others as ends in themselves means acting toward them in a way that makes your end transparent to them and gives them the choice of whether to contribute to that end: “In any cooperative project—whenever you need the decisions and actions of others in order to bring about your end—everyone who is to contribute must be in a position to *choose* to contribute to the end” (Korsgaard, 1996, p. 140).

Third, Kant argued that not only must we treat others as ends, we also ought to regard them as rational beings in control of their actions (Kant, 1785/1993). This latter obligation speaks to the attitudes we hold of the other, and has important implications in teacher-child relationships: “To treat another with respect is to treat him as if he were

using his reason and as far as possible as if he were using it well. Even in a case where someone evidently is wrong or mistaken, we ought to suppose he must have what he takes to be good reasons for what he believes or what he does” (Korsgaard, 1996, p. 141).

### **Kant’s Influence on Moral Psychology: Piaget, Kohlberg, and Gilligan**

Jean Piaget initiated landmark studies of child development with the hypothesis that children’s thought processes are markedly different from those of adults. In *The Moral Judgment of the Child* (1932/1997), Piaget used evidence from interviews and detailed observations of children playing to formulate a stage theory of moral development. Piaget contended that children’s moral notions are developed through interactions with others and that human ethical reasoning follows a prescribed, linear path of development. According to Piaget (1932/1997, pp. 18, 45-56), moral laws are first understood externally as rules or punishments with negative, concrete consequences for the self (e.g. I must not hit my brother or I won’t get dinner.) As children mature, they begin to internalize moral laws (pp. 36, 56-69) and understand them as good for social order (e.g. I must not hit my brother because it disrupts family life and that is bad). The final stage (pp. 40-41, 56-69) is reached when children learn to reason according to abstract, moral principles - such as the categorical imperative (e.g. I must not hit my brother because it is wrong – and irrational – to cause harm to others) (Kant, 1785/1993).. This latter stage includes the ability to distinguish between cultural conventions and the existence of universal moral laws. Piaget drew heavily on Kantian

moral categories including respect for persons and the requirement for universalism (Kant, 1785/1993).

Lawrence Kohlberg (1981) drew on Piaget's stage theory of human development and expanded it to include six stages of moral reasoning.

<b>The Six Stages of Moral Judgment</b>	
Stage 1: The Stage of Punishment and Obedience	Right is literal obedience to rules and authority, avoiding punishment, and not doing physical harm.
Stage 2: The Stage of Individual Instrumental Purpose and Exchange	Right is serving one's own or other's needs and making fair deals in terms of concrete exchange.
Stage 3: The Stage of Mutual Interpersonal Expectations, Relationships, and Conformity	The right is playing a good (nice) role, being concerned about the other people and their feelings, keeping loyalty and trust with partners, and being motivated to follow their rules and expectations.
Stage 4: The Stage of Social System and Conscience Maintenance	The right is doing one's duty in society, upholding the social order, and maintaining the welfare of society or the group.
Stage 5: The Stage of Prior Rights and Social Contract or Utility	The right is upholding the basic rights, values, and legal contracts of a society, even when they conflict with the concrete rules and laws of the group.
Stage 6: The Stage of Universal Ethical Principles	This stage assumes guidance by universal ethical principles that all humanity should follow.

Figure 2.1 (Kohlberg, 1981, pp. 409-412)

Kohlberg (1981) contended that these stages were universal (meaning they applied to both men and women in every culture) and he conducted cross-cultural research to demonstrate that diverse peoples followed the same sequences of moral thought as they matured (p. xxviii). Like Piaget before him, Kohlberg aligned his theory with the moral categories outlined by Kant (Kant, 1785/1993; Kohlberg, 1981, p. 22). But Kohlberg encountered difficulties with the universal dimensions of Kant's theory. While Kohlberg found evidence of stage 1, 2, and 3 reasoning in all cultures he studied, many

non-Western, agrarian societies seemed to lack any persons capable of demonstrating stage 4, 5, and 6 reasoning (Kohlberg, 1981, pp. 23-28). While critics cite used this as evidence undermining Kohlberg's (and Kant's) hypothesis of moral universalism (Gilligan, 1982), Kohlberg suggested that these societies simply lacked the collective moral maturation to produce thinking in the higher moral stages (Kant, 1785/1993; Kohlberg, 1981, pp. 126-130).

A wealth of cross-cultural research has been conducted since Kohlberg outlined his stage theory of moral development to show how his conceptualizations were flawed or incomplete (Edwards, 1975; Gilligan, 1982; Hwang, 1998; Noddings, 1984; Shweder, 1987; Snarey, 1985; Sunar, 2002). I'll briefly outline some key criticisms here. The first concerns cultural bias. Critics argue that stages 5 and 6 represent Western ethical ideals that may not be valued in non-Western societies. A re-analysis of data on Taiwanese subjects (Hwang, 1998) found that initial researchers had consistently underscored responses because the (Western) scorers misunderstood important differences between Chinese and Western ethical commitments:

Lei found that the Chinese traditional values of filial piety and collective utility were misrepresented in criterion judgments given under Stage 3, and no examples were given under Stage 5. The misclassification was made in ignorance of the preeminent value of filial piety in Chinese culture. (p. 230)

Similarly, Shweder (1987) found that Indian culture employed a type of moral discourse (narrative) in analyzing ethical dilemmas that made it impossible for highly trained Kohlbergian scorers to identify and score according to Kohlberg's stages, thus misclassifying responses in lower stages. Interestingly, critics seem to generally agree

that the cross-cultural research proves that Kohlberg's stages are invariant (Edwards, 1975; Snarey, 1985; Sunar, 2002) —that is to say, all cultures showed a similar developmental progression through the stages even though higher stages didn't exist in some cultures. However, some critics (Gilligan, 1982; Noddings, 1984) have challenged the validity of the stages themselves, arguing that they are gender and culture biased and not reflective of an inherent, universal developmental sequence.

Gilligan (1982) argued that Kohlberg's framework rests on the assumption that justice is the foundation of the highest stages of moral reasoning (p. 27). After studying comparable groups of men and women (pp. 2-3), Gilligan discovered that men were more likely to end up in stage 4, while women were likely to be in stage 3 (p. 18). Gilligan (p. 19) noted that stage 3 thinking involves a person's desire to please others, whereas stage 4 reasoning involves moving from an emphasis on connection (relationships) to separation (adherence to rules). Gilligan pointed out that stage 3 qualities are often used by women to show compassion for others and mediate conflicts (pp. 44-45, 97), and that it was biased to suggest that these skills were inferior to stage 4 thinking (p. 18). Gilligan contended that there are two distinct gendered ethical modes of thought—the justice orientation and the care orientation, and that Kohlberg's moral theory, derived from a male sample, is biased toward the justice orientation (pp. 18, 62-63).

One final critique worth mentioning is the social complexity critique. This argument espoused by Edwards (1975) accepts the classification of different kinds of moral reasoning but rejects the hierarchical valuation of stages. Societal complexity theory suggests that simple societies engage in the level of moral reasoning resonant with

the required level of decision-making, social control, and conflict resolution needed in particular contexts. “Built into the operational definitions of stages 3 and 4 are different assumptions about the nature of society” (p. 520). Edwards contends that the stage theory is flawed because the degree to which the reasoning (i.e. stage) is appropriate depends on the cultural context. Thus, stage 5 reasoning would be inappropriate in a stage 2 society, and vice versa. Thus, the stages aren’t stages at all, but simply categories of different types of reasoning associated with different models of social governance and order.

“Although stage 4 is considered more complex and differentiated than stage 3, it is not as a function of its greater cognitive difficulty that it is more likely to be absent among peasant villagers than urban dwellers.... Modes of moral judgment should be viewed as adaptive structures developed by people to accomplish important tasks at hand” (p. 525).

The difficulties encountered by Kohlberg and other moral psychologists and social scientists who have borrowed principles and categories from the field of moral philosophy are the result of the conflation of Hume’s the old distinction between *ought* and *is* (Hume, 1739-40/2000). As a moral philosopher, Kant’s ethical theory describes how we *ought* to think and behave based upon principles derived from reason alone Kant, 1785/1993). Kant’s moral philosophy does not nor was it ever intended to describe how human beings generally think or act—empirically speaking—nor did it take into consideration cultural, historical, and other relevant contexts. The challenge for education researchers interested in the empirical study and application of moral philosophy to modern U.S. classroom settings, therefore, is to avoid conflating *ought* and *is*, and yet make a meaningful connection between the two.



## **Nel Noddings and the Development of the Ethics of Care**

Nel Noddings is an American philosopher, born in 1929. She received advanced degrees in mathematics and education, and spent seventeen years as a school teacher and administrator (elementary and secondary). Noddings has held professorships at Stanford, Columbia, and Colgate universities, and is widely published in the fields of moral education, educational theory, and social psychology (Noddings, 1984, 2002a, 2002b, 2005, 2007). Noddings is best known for her ethic of care. Published shortly after Carol Gilligan's feminist treatise on moral development, *In a Different Voice* (1982), Noddings' book *Caring: A Feminist Approach to Ethics and Moral Education* (1984) lays out an ethic of human behavior grounded in relationships. In this section, I explain what Noddings meant by caring and what caring looks and feels like from the perspective of the one-caring, the cared-for, and the third-party observer. I'll conclude this chapter with thoughts on how the ethic of care relates to Kant's respect for persons.

What is caring? For Noddings (1984), caring can be understood as the relationship between the one-caring and the cared-for. She argued that for an interaction to be properly called caring, these five criteria must be met: 1. A level of engrossment on the part of the one-caring. The one-caring must have a genuine interest and focused attention on the cared-for (p. 30); 2. A displacement of motivation from self-interest to empathy for the cared-for (p. 33); 3. An action on the part of the one-caring that is intended to lead to a positive impact on the cared-for (pp. 23-26); 4. A perception on the part of the cared-for that the one-caring is genuine in her regard for the cared-for (pp. 19, 60-61); 5. The cared-for receiving the one-caring positively and with openness (p. 20).

## **The One-Caring**

Noddings (1984) explained that even though we often assess caring as third-party individuals, the essence of caring lies in the relationship between the one-caring and the cared-for (p. 9). She then questioned how we know if someone cares, using the example of a man caring for his elderly mother. There is the statement of caring: “I care.” There is the observable action (he visits his mother, asks the nurses how she is doing). Noddings problematized the notion of the action being the criterion for caring by pointing out that often the caring thing to do is inaction. In one of Noddings’ examples, she described a family who is poverty-stricken—an outsider might want to help and provide the family with clothing and food. But suppose the parents are trying to be independent, and the outsider’s actions inhibit their desires to right their situation themselves? Another way to think about this is that a caring action must take into consideration the needs and wishes of the cared-for, or as Noddings (1984) put it on page 14, “I try to apprehend the reality of the other.”

Returning to the man with an elderly mother (p. 10), what if he were simply to pay for his mother’s residence in a nursing home? Would this constitute care? In another sense, one could care for another without engaging in any direct action toward them. The example Noddings used is that of two lovers who are already married to others—the man loves the woman, but recognizes that it would cause the woman harm to approach her, so the caring thing to do is stay away (1984, pp. 10-11). Noddings’ examples served to underscore her point that caring is a complex and subjective topic, and that it is important to examine it from the first, second, and third-person views.

## **The Cared-For**

Noddings explained that from the perspective of the cared-for, there is no other element as important as the perceived attitude of the one-caring. An action begrudgingly performed will not have the same impact on the cared-for as one that seems to arise from a genuine display of love and attention. “When the attitude of the one-caring bespeaks caring, the cared-for glows, grows stronger, and feels not so much that he has been given something as that something has been added to him” (Noddings, 1984, p. 20). Noddings then pointed out that there is no need in this caring relationship for either party to specify what has occurred. This however, produces a dilemma for researchers who want to answer empirically the question, “Has caring taken place?” Noddings’ response to this might be that we can only see evidence of the caring in the relationship and the behaviors of the one-caring and cared-for, not, for example, in outcomes such as test scores or children’s behavior with others. Thus, as observers, we would want to see indications of affection or regard, not simply a decision based on a universal principle (Noddings, 1984, p. 20). However, Noddings pointed out that it would be easy for the observer to misread the one-caring’s signals, and so evaluations of caring must be based on the action itself and whether it brings about or is likely to bring about a positive outcome for the cared-for, and second, whether the one-caring shows some variability in her actions that suggest she is reacting to the specific person in a specific context.

Noddings pointed out the wealth of evidence that suggests that the response of the cared-for to the one-caring is observable (the “glowing and growing”), and that the lack of a response (when the cared-for perceives rejection rather than caring) is even more

observable. “Hence, a claim that attitude is crucial to an analysis of caring, that feeling is somehow conveyed directly, is partially supported empirically” (Noddings, 1984, p. 68). When the cared-for does not perceive an attitude of caring in the one-caring, she (the cared-for) is likely to feel objectified (Noddings, 1984, p. 65)—treated as an abstraction rather than an individual. Over time, caring establishes in the cared-for an attitude of receptiveness. Not only does this lead the child to take on the position of one-caring with his peers but also leads to his openness to ideas and things (Noddings, 1984, p. 60).

There has been a great deal of scholarship on the ethic of care<sup>2</sup> since its early formulation by feminist theorists such as Gilligan (1982) and Noddings (1984). Many of these scholars have sought to broaden the moral relevance of this ethical orientation by demonstrating its contributions to understanding politics and global relations (Held, 2006; Robinson, 1999; Tronto, 1994, 2006); others have explored ways that the ethic of care might be brought into harmony with deontological (e.g. Kantian) ethics (Baier, 1987; Clement, 1996; Harrington, 2000; Kittay, 1987, 1999). Other theorists and activists have examined ways in which the ethic of care might be used to inform best practice in other fields such as health care (Stone, 2000), public welfare and social policy (Hamington and Miller, 2006; Noddings, 2002b), animal rights (Adams and Donovan, 1996, 2007; Engster, 2006; Kheel, 2008; Manning, 1992, 1996), and employment practices (Tucker, 2006). This study builds on the work of these care scholars by extending understanding of the ethic of care to descriptive classroom research, and

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<sup>2</sup> Some scholars use the term “ethics of care” to indicate that there are many theories that fit within this label while others prefer “ethic of care” to emphasize what these theories have in common (Held, 2006). Since my use of the term focuses on the general consensus of an ethic of care, I’ve used that term here.

exploring how this ethic works in congruity (both theoretically and empirically) with Kantian-based notions of morality.

How then does the ethic of care relate to Kant's definition of respect for persons? First, the one-caring must display a genuine empathy for the cared-for. This empathy begins with an inclination to care that is then further developed by the one-caring into an intentional way of acting toward the cared-for, with the hopes that the action will positively impact the cared-for (Noddings, 1984). In this sense, feelings and desires are central to Noddings' conception of respect—in fact, they are the building blocks of respect. Second, a respectful interaction does not simply consist of the actions and attitudes of the one-caring. According to Noddings, it is important for the cared-for to perceive that the caring expressed by the one-caring is genuine, and for that caring to be received positively and with openness (1984).

In the next section, I bring together the ideas of Kant and Noddings to explore their similarities and differences, leading to the articulation of my own theoretical framework of the concepts of caring and respect. I'll also look at implications for classroom practice and research, and outline research questions that stem from this framework.

## **Discussion**

At first glance, Kant's respect for persons and Noddings' ethic of care stand in opposition to one another. For Kant, respect is grounded in reason, and his notion negates the importance of feelings and desires (1785/1993, p. 20). In fact, Kant argues that

respect is most profound when it does not align with one's inclinations, for only in that sense may we see that it is respect for duty rather than personal gain that motivates our actions (1785/1993, pp. 9-13). For Noddings, the ethic of care is rooted in persons' natural inclinations to be caring: "An ethic built on caring strives to maintain the caring attitude and is thus depending on, and not superior to, natural caring" (Noddings, 1984, p. 80).

Kant's ethic is based on an abstract principle (respect for duty), whereas Noddings' ethic is rooted in human relationships (Kant, 1785/1993, p. 13; Noddings, 1984, pp. 3-5). Noddings suggests that ethical action is subjective and must be grounded in the particular relationship between individuals and the specific context (p. 5). For Kant, ethical action must be generalizable—what is good in a particular situation can only be called so if it would also be good in other like situations: "I ought never to act except in such a way that I can also will that my maxim become a universal law" (Beauchamp, 2008, p. 57).

According to Kant, a good will is that which bases action in moral obligation (1785/1993, pp. 7-8). But Noddings says that good will, or a caring motive, is understood as a combination of engrossment in the other and a displacement of motivation (Noddings, 1984, pp. 33-34).

Noddings herself has declared that the ethic of care is anti-Kantian. She argues:

Kant subordinated feeling to reason. He insisted that only acts done out of duty to carefully reasoned principle are morally worthy. Love, feeling, and inclination are all supposed by Kant to be untrustworthy. An ethic of care inverts these priorities. The preferred state is natural caring; ethical caring

is invoked to restore it. This inversion of priority is one great difference between Kantian ethics and an ethic of care.

Another difference is anchored in feminist perspectives. An ethic of care is thoroughly relational.... A relational interpretation of caring pushes us to look not only at moral agents but also at the recipients of their acts and the conditions under which the parties interact.

Contrary to Kant, who insisted that each person's moral perfection is his or her own project, we remain at least partly responsible for the moral development of each person we encounter. How I treat you may bring out the best or worst in you. How you behave may provide a model for me to grow and become better than I am. Whether I can become and remain a caring person—one who enters regularly into caring relations—depends in large part on how you respond to me. (Noddings, 2002a, p. 15)

However, many scholars have argued that the ethics of Kant and Noddings are not as much at odds as they may first seem. Wike (2011) pointed out that Kant spoke of “conditions of receptiveness” necessary for respect for duty: “First, he states that the love of human beings and respect are two of the four subjective conditions of receptiveness to the concept of duty. They are thus natural predispositions of the mind on the side of feeling. They are not themselves duties because they are preconditions for duty. Every human being has these predispositions and it is because of them that we can be put under obligation” (p. 8). Both Kant and Noddings, then, spoke of the importance of caring or respectful “feelings” out of which an ethical obligation might arise (Kant, 1785/1993, p. 46, Noddings, 1984, p. 80). When applied to the study of moral development, it stands to reason that cultivating these feelings or inclinations toward caring and respect are as important as cultivating rational faculties that enable one to do the right thing, in a moral sense, even in the absence of these inclinations.

Both Kant and Noddings emphasized that the moral good requires that we hold the other in high regard. Kant framed this obligation as always treating others as ends in themselves so that they might willingly assent to our actions toward them (Kant, 1785/1993, p. 35); Noddings characterized this priority as a displacement of motivation so that the interests and experiences of the cared-for are the primary considerations in the one-caring's actions (1984, pp. 33-34).

Noddings argued that Kant's ethics are not relational because he holds that one must act solely out of duty (1984, p. 80). However, if being "relational" means that the interaction between self and other is important (as opposed to only the intentions or actions of the self), then it is easy to find common ground between the two philosophers. As Wike (2011) explained, "Noddings' ethic is relational in describing the nature and the effects of our obligation to act in confirming ways, Kant's ethic is similarly relational in requiring us to apply the veil of philanthropy and thereby facilitate others' moral growth" (p. 11). Indeed, Kant (1797/1996) argued that in order to treat others as ends in themselves, we must ascribe the best possible interpretation to their actions, even when they seem faulty or immoral to us, for it is our duty to respect each person's capacity for being a fully rational being. Kant explained:

Hereupon is founded a duty to respect man even in the logical use of his reason: not to censure someone's error under the name of absurdity, inept judgment, and the like, but rather to suppose that in such an inept judgment there must be something true, and to seek it out.... Thus it is also with the reproach of vice, which must never burst out in complete contempt or deny the wrongdoer of all moral worth, because on that hypothesis he could never be improved either—and this latter is incompatible with the idea of man, who as such (as a moral being) can never lose all predisposition to good. (pp. 463-464)



There is a sense here, in Kant's explanation, that respect carries with it a duty to treat persons with generosity of interpretation so that they might see what it is they are capable of, and work toward moral improvement. Similarly, as Wike (2011) pointed out, Noddings held that when the cared-for errs, the one-caring must assume the best intentions with the aim of helping the cared-for improve:

When a student cheats, for example, the teacher needs to be concerned with the child's motive and what this behavior means for his or her growth as a person. Caring teachers do not confine themselves to stopping undesirable behavior and meting out fair or impartial punishments. They begin with the best possible motive, consonant with reality, and help the student to understand and evaluate his or her own thinking and behavior. (Noddings, 1984, pp. 50-51)

Both Noddings and Kant, then, believed that treating others with respect includes the commitment to understanding and attributing the most generous interpretation to their motives, to treating them kindly when they have a lapse in judgment, and to helping them better their capacity to reason.

### **Synthesizing the Ethics of Kant and Noddings: A Framework of Caring and Respect**

This section summarizes the characteristics of Kant's and Noddings' theories of moral action that will serve as the initial theoretical framework for this dissertation study. What do I mean when I refer to caring and respect?

1. Caring and respect are moral principles that have innate worth, as described by Kant and Noddings (Kant, 1785/1993; Noddings, 1984)<sup>3</sup>;
2. Respect entails treating all persons as ends in themselves (Kant, 1785/1993);
3. Caring and respect both are grounded in the assumption that others are in control of their actions and have good reasons for acting as they do, and the commitment to seek out those reasons ((Kant, 1785/1993; Noddings, 1984);
4. An essential part of respect is the obligation to help others further develop their capacity to reason (Kant, 1785/1993);
5. Cultivating feelings and inclinations toward caring serves as a building block to the attainment of ethical duty (Kant, 1785/1993; Noddings, 1984).

With these definitions in hand, I'll turn to the empirical component of this project: viewing videos of pre-K classrooms through this lens. The research questions that stem from this framework include:

- What are caring and respect? (theoretical, covered in Chapter 2)
- What teacher behaviors are associated with treating others with caring and respect? (empirical, the subject of Chapters 3-4).

During my review of the literature, I applied the ethics of care and respect for persons to my own experiences and thousands of hours of observations of preschool classrooms (see Professional Experiences in Chapter 1). Both of these anecdotal data sets

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<sup>3</sup> The innate worth of caring and respect is described by both Kant and Noddings as *philosophical* concepts rather than observed phenomenon; i.e., caring and respect are *ideas* grounded in reason and rational argument. However, the principles can be studied empirically insofar as they are present or absent in the observable behaviors between teachers and children in classroom settings.

suggested to me that I would find limited examples of caring and respect in my preschool samples, even in classrooms indicated as providing highly effective emotional support as defined by the CLASS measure (Pianta, 2008). These hunches led me to select classroom samples that contained behaviors on both extremes of the continuum as presented in Figure 1.1. This selection process will be further discussed in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODS OF INQUIRY

#### **Introduction**

What is method? Smith and Heshusius (1986) argue that method may be understood in two ways:

The most commonly encountered meaning is method as procedures or techniques. In this case the term invokes the kinds of “how to do it” discussions long found in introductory textbooks on quantitative inquiry, and more recently, in a number of basic textbooks on qualitative inquiry.... The second characterization of method is as “logic-of-justification.”... The focus here is not on techniques but on the elaboration of logical issues and, ultimately, on the justifications that inform practice.... This conceptualization involves such basic questions as, What is the nature of social and educational reality? What is the relationship of the investigator to what is investigated? And how is truth to be defined? (p. 8)

In other words, Smith and Heshusius (1986) argue that a more comprehensive view of the term “method” requires a shift from a purely instrumentalist enterprise (research as the means, not the beginning or the end) to one that begins with the analysis of important issues and the ways in which scholars study, explain, and justify their interpretations of their findings.

Building upon that idea, this chapter has two purposes: 1) it provides a justification for the importance of qualitative research, as well as a discussion of some of the thorny issues qualitative researchers (ought to) encounter as they undertake their research; and 2) it lays out the methods of inquiry for my dissertation project, tools, procedures, and analysis of data, as well as the limitations and delimitations of the study.

### **Trends in Empirical Research in Ethics and Education**

Many educators and philosophers have placed the locus of moral education within a social rather than purely individual context, believing that morality is best learned and communicated as an interplay among individuals, their social communities, and their environment (Berman, 1997; Beyer and Liston, 1996; Dewey, 1944; Kincheloe, 1999; Noddings, 1984; Shor and Freire, 1987). In the past few decades, a great deal of ethnographic research has documented the formal and informal ways social institutions communicate values and norms for behavior (Anyon, 1980; Cusick, 1973; Peshkin, 1986; Tobin, et al, 1989; Varenne and McDermott, 1998; Willis, 1977). These studies have led to renewed interest in understanding school climate and culture (as well as the social climate outside the school) as conditions impacting moral reasoning and behavior (Corsaro, 2003; McCadden, 1998; Wyner, 1991).

Contemporary emphases on understanding human moral development in a cultural context depend on ethnography and other qualitative methods to illuminate the complex social mechanisms and structures with which individuals interact, thereby creating and transforming themselves and others, as well as their physical and social environments. Over the past 120 years, social theorists have focused on notions of negotiation, interaction, and constructivism to explain identity and moral development in social contexts (Devries and Zan, 2012; Dewey, 1915, 1944, 1997). More recently, feminists, postmodernists, and critical theorists have been drawing our attention to the colonial roots of contemporary anthropological discourse, while critiquing developmental and cultural evolutionary models of human social and moral development that continue to

find receptive audiences (Gilligan, 1982; McLaren, 1991; Noddings, 1984; Shor and Freire, 1987).

Many researchers have tried to ameliorate imperial and colonial influences on anthropology through innovative methods such as multisite ethnography (Marcus, 1995), polyvocal film techniques (Tobin et al, 1989), and co-collaboration between researcher and informants (Bloustien, 2003). Some posit postmodern or constructivist theories that highlight the ways in which individuals negotiate and construct their social identities through and against cultural mechanisms of reproduction and transmission. McLaren (1991) explained that postmodern social theorists:

Have employed the term *subjectivity* rather than *identity* in order to highlight the decentered aspect of the self which poststructuralist theorists argue is more fluid, plural, discontinuous, and contingent than the model of the self bequeathed by the Cartesian or humanistic tradition associated with conservative and liberal conceptions of the subject. Much of the recent work in feminist versions of postmodern social theory has also taken up the idea that subjectivity is contradictory and multiplex, a view which runs counter to various traditions of humanist social theory. Within this perspective, the subject is always partial and often defined in contradictory ways as the effects of multiple determinations which may be affective, ideological, material, or gendered. (p. 242)

Still others have turned social examination and critique *inward* and *upward* in order to critique and examine dominant cultural perspectives and structures (Davies, 1997; Kenny, 2000; Marcus and Hall, 1992; Rollins, 1985). One theme is clear among these researchers: the assumption of moral homogeneity within a culture—the idea that the peoples within a society or culture possess uniform moral characteristics, rather than individuals or subgroups within cultures—is outdated. Qualitative research is particularly well-situated to explore the complexities of morality within cultures, and educational

researchers have come to examine classrooms as moral communities in their own right (Bennett and LeCompte, 1990; Cusick, 1973; Jackson, 1968; Jackson et al, 1993; Labaree, 1988; Metz, 1986; Rutter et al, 1979; Swidler, 1979; Willis, 1977). It is this understanding, that morality and moral development happens in the moment-to-moment interactions between individuals, that has led to my dissertation topic.

This study of classroom video goes beyond the superficially obvious, in order to challenge our notions of what an ethical classroom climate should be. On first viewing, many observers might see little in the videos presented that would look out of the ordinary, given their own social and educational experiences. The casual observer might therefore be inclined to see the interactions between children and teachers as nothing more than "business-as-usual." Social scientists might be content to simply describe what they see, in more detail of course than the casual observer, but nevertheless allow the normative dimensions of the interactions themselves to go unchallenged. But in doing so much potential insight is lost. Video analysis allows for a different kind of study from that of live observation. With videos, researchers can stop, rewind, replay, and slow down observations. Recording allows for the creation of transcripts, which can then be analyzed "The power of video records is not in what they make easily clear, but in what they challenge and disrupt in the initial assumptions of an analysis" (Goldman and McDermott, 2007, p. 101). This study uses video analysis combined with normative theory to unpack a deeper level that cannot otherwise be easily seen—a level that suggests that "business-as-usual" is not as good as we may initially assume.

In this dissertation I have examined both formal and informal developments in the history of research on morality and moral education. Because moral education traverses multiple social sites, this topic has been examined by scholars rooted in several disciplines; anthropologists have studied moral socialization and comparative ethics within and among diverse societies; psychologists have studied cognitive and developmental processes at work in individuals' moral thinking and behavior; and educational researchers and curriculum theorists have implemented and evaluated formal moral instruction in schools. It has been accepted among scholars, particularly educational anthropologists, for some time that formal moral instruction is intricately linked to cultural belief systems and socio-political agendas. Many modern researchers attempt to examine the complex relationship between informal and formal processes of human (including moral) development, behavior, and cultural beliefs and systems (Corsaro, 1988; Heath, 1983; Lubeck, 1985; Tobin et al, 1989, Woodhouse, 1988). All of these social scientists have studied morality from an empirical perspective, asking questions about what *is*—that is, how human beings actually tend to think and act in areas of moral concern.

However, moral philosophers and other ethicists (e.g., religious scholars) continue to use reason and rational arguments to investigate how human beings *ought* to think and act. Bringing the two together – the empirical study of how people think and act with the theoretical investigation of how human beings ought to think and act is a brand new challenge that opens up exciting new lines of inquiry (Appiah, 2008). Only in recent decades have researchers begun to study the topic from an interdisciplinary perspective



that seeks to connect empirical studies with ethical arguments, and this dissertation is at the forefront of this new movement.

### **Classroom Research on Ethical Relationships**

Until recently (Bloch et al, 2014), there has been relatively little qualitative research in early childhood settings (Browning and Hatch, 1995), specifically studies which integrate ethical inquiry and empirical investigations. A more nuanced understanding of these dynamics is critical to going beyond the “business as usual” approaches which tend to be either strictly *philosophical* or strictly *social scientific* (i.e. observational or experimental) in orientation. A situated inquiry using video analysis (as this study employs) provides an opportunity for combining this more philosophically-oriented research with careful empirical observations.

The preponderance of research focused on teacher-child relationships has been quantitative, with researchers evaluating the extent to which interventions intended to change the ways teachers interact with children contributes to changes in student academic outcomes. This body of research is grounded in the scholarship of psychologists who demonstrated the profound influence of attachment on child development and psychology (Ainsworth et al, 1978; Bowlby, 1969; Lally and Mangione, 2007; Rogoff, 2003; Sroufe and Fleeson, 1988). Though they focused primarily on mother-child relationships, they paved the way for thinking about the impact of other primary relationships on children’s wellbeing.

Earlier work, including Pedersen et al (1978) and Werner and Smith (1982) demonstrated the importance of teacher relationships for children’s emotional health and

resilience and future success. Goodlad's research (1991) suggested that a personality mismatch between teachers and children can impact children's development. Other studies suggested that targeted emphasis on improving the quality of teacher-child relationships impacted student outcomes on achievement tests (McIntosh, Rizza, and Bliss, 2000; Pianta, 1999). The consensus that emerged from this foundational body of research is that there are slight to modest associations between the quality of teacher-child relationships and child outcomes. Some of these studies hinted at what is meant by "quality"—for example, Pianta described several dimensions of teacher's emotional support in the classroom, and included "respect" as one indicator of that emotional support (Pianta, 2008). However, my review of the literature has not yielded a single study that specifically looks at the concepts of caring and respect for persons, or explored the ways in which these ethics play out in classroom interactions. Furthermore, while the importance of teacher-child relationships has been highlighted in the national research agenda in recent decades, the vast majority of research conducted on the topic focused on evaluating these interactions in terms of their instrumental benefit: that is, to what extent these relationships impact children's school readiness or academic achievement. Like Kant, I believe that respect for persons is inherently important, and not simply because it leads to gains on test scores (Kant, 1785/1993). In this study, I explore what caring and respect looks like in the *here-and-now*. As stated in Chapter 2, my definitions of caring and respect stem from the two major philosophical traditions that are embodied in the work of Immanuel Kant and Nel Noddings, reflecting the following tenets:

1. Caring and respect are moral principles that have innate worth, as described by Kant and Noddings (Kant, 1785/1993; Noddings, 1984)<sup>4</sup>;
2. Respect entails treating all persons as ends in themselves (Kant, 1785/1993);
3. Caring and respect both are grounded in the assumption that others are in control of their actions and have good reasons for acting as they do, and the commitment to seek out those reasons ((Kant, 1785/1993; Noddings, 1984);
4. An essential part of respect is the obligation to help others further develop their capacity to reason (Kant, 1785/1993);
5. Cultivating feelings and inclinations toward caring serves as a building block to the attainment of ethical duty (Kant, 1785/1993; Noddings, 1984).

The rest of this chapter is devoted to explaining the empirical components of my study that will be used to investigate the quality of classroom interactions based upon the ethical categories of caring and respect for persons previously outlined.

### **Sampling**

It has become the norm in the United States for children under the age of 5 to spend significant time in early childhood programs outside the home. As of 2012, 60% of children were reported to be in a non-parental caregiving setting on a weekly basis (Mamedova and Redford, 2013). Of these children, 80% are cared for by non-relatives, in school or community-based centers. This trend has remained relatively constant since

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<sup>4</sup> The innate worth of caring and respect is described by both Kant and Noddings as *philosophical* concepts rather than observed phenomenon; i.e., caring and respect are *ideas* grounded in reason and rational argument. However, the principles can be studied empirically insofar as they are present or absent in the observable behaviors between teachers and children in classroom settings.

1995 (Child Trends, 2012). The U.S. Department of Education has launched a federal initiative to increase the number of low-income children enrolled in “high-quality” early learning programs (Race to the Top Act, 2011).

This study is a secondary data analysis of classroom videos collected for a large-scale research project conducted by the National Center for Research on Early Childhood Education (Chien et al, 2010). NCRECE is funded by the Institute of Educational Science (IES) and is a collaboration between researchers at the University of Virginia, University of North Carolina-Greensboro, and University of California-Los Angeles. The NCRECE study was a randomized clinical trial of nearly 700 pre-kindergarten classrooms in eleven states (Chien et al, 2010). These pre-K classrooms were located in public schools, Head Start centers, and community-based programs (Chien et al, 2010). Classrooms were filmed on a biweekly basis over the course of a year, and teachers received a small stipend for their participation (Chien et al, 2010).

Secondary analyses may simply be understood as “reanalysis of previously collected survey data or other information” and typically focus on “analyzing rather than collecting data” (Neuman, 1997, p. 285). Benefits of secondary analyses include saving time and money, and investigating questions left untapped by the original researcher (Neuman, 1997, pp. 285-286). The original NCRECE researchers used the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS), an observational measure of teacher-child interactions (Pianta et al, 2008). They developed large data sets that analyzed CLASS scores in relation to student outcomes (primarily achievement tests) and yielded quantitative results (Chien et al, 2010).

For my study, I employed purposive sampling, and more specifically, maximum variation sampling (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Also referred to as theoretical sampling, this technique provides researchers with the ability to maximize differences across a range of contexts with the goal of developing a more complex understanding of the theoretical concepts under consideration (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). I compared and contrasted my observations of teachers' and children's experiences in classrooms characterized by a high degree of caring and respect and those characterized by a low degree of caring and respect. As a starting point for my sampling selection, I used the CLASS instrument (Pianta et al, 2008) to assess classrooms that received the highest and lowest scores on the domain of Emotional Support, which encompasses classroom climate (both positive and negative) and teachers' sensitivity to and regard for children's interests and needs. I initially observed 20 minutes of footage from each of the 10 classrooms scored by CLASS coders high in emotional support, and 20 minutes from each of the 10 classrooms coded low in emotional support. From there, I identified three classrooms on either end of the maximum variation sampling spectrum that illustrated the types of behaviors indicated as empirical evidence of caring and respect.<sup>5</sup>

### **The CLASS Observational Instrument**

I employed the CLASS instrument to identify the criteria for data sampling. The CLASS instrument was developed by educational researchers at the University of Virginia in the early 1990s (Pianta et al, 2008). It identifies key teacher-child interactions that contribute to children's learning and development, as measured by standardized test

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<sup>5</sup> See Figure 1.1 in Chapter 1.

scores. The CLASS has been validated in over 6000 classrooms (Center for Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning, n.d.) which means that research has shown that CLASS scores predict student outcomes in the areas of math and literacy (Burchinal et al, 2010; Burchinal et al, 2012; Connor et al, 2005; Curby et al, in press; Curby et al, 2009; Dobbs-Oates et al, 2011; Dominguez, et al, 2010; Dominguez et al, 2011; Downer et al, 2011; Guo et al, 2010; Howes et al, 2008; Logan et al, 2011; Maier et al, 2012; Mashburn et al, 2008; McGinty et al, 2012; Pianta et al, 2005, 2008; Vitiello et al, 2012; Vu et al, 2008). These validation studies included ethnically and socioeconomically diverse classrooms from around the country and included Head Start classrooms and other publically-funded programs, and dual-language populations. The CLASS instrument is one of the few (and currently, the predominant) measures for researching interactions in the classroom. Most classroom assessment measures, particularly in early childhood programs, focus on structural elements of the classroom such as curricula, teacher credentials, classroom environmental rating criteria, or outcomes, like proficiency tests or kindergarten readiness evaluations. What makes the CLASS unique is that it focuses specifically on the interactions between teachers and children.

Classrooms that achieve high scores in the Emotional Support domain are the kinds of classrooms I'd want my children to be in. They're warm, the teachers and children have fun, children's feelings are acknowledged and validated, and teachers care about what children need, want, and think. In this sense, the CLASS measure is an appropriate sampling tool because the authors and I all believe in the importance of caring and respectful behaviors between teachers and children: in classrooms that achieve

a high score in Emotional Support, teachers listen to children, care about their interests and perspectives, and do not belittle or humiliate them with comments or punishments.

That said, the argument for the validity of the CLASS measure rests on the assumption that teacher-child interactions are important because they contribute to children's learning and development and success in school. In all this research, children's learning and development and success in school are measured by math and literacy achievement tests. The danger of such an assumption is that it suggests that teacher-child interactions are only of instrumental importance—valuable because they lead to higher test scores (which is assumed to be a valid measure of learning, development, and school success). If respectful interactions were not empirically found to contribute to higher test scores, they would be of little value, according to this logic.

I argue that teacher-child interactions (just as other human relationships) are important in of themselves. They're important because they shape the experiences, feelings, and ideas of the players involved. They're important in the moment and they're important memory markers that shape our future thoughts, emotions, and behaviors. In other words, teacher-child relationships are intrinsically important—in ethical terms, they have *normative value*.

### **Coding with the CLASS Measure**

The CLASS measure uses a scale of 1-7 to code each dimension within the CLASS framework (Pianta et al, 2008). Coders observe classrooms for one cycle, usually a period of 15-20 minutes (these may be either live or videotaped observations). At the end of the cycle, coders use the technical CLASS manual to match their observations of

specific behaviors to low, mid, and high range descriptions of behaviors in the CLASS manual (Pianta et al, 2008). Observers must be certified on the CLASS measure (at each age level) to code classrooms using the instrument (Pianta et al, 2008). Certification involves a two-day training, followed by passing a reliability test. The reliability test consists of five classroom videos, 15-20 minutes in length (Pianta et al, 2008). To be reliable, observers must score within one point of the master code for 80% of the codes, as well as code accurately within each dimension for two of the five videos (Pianta et al, 2008).

### **The CLASS Framework**

The CLASS measure categorizes teacher-child interactions into three primary areas: Emotional Support, Classroom Organization, and Instructional Support (Pianta et al, 2008). Emotional Support captures how teachers create a positive climate in the classroom, reduce negativity, attend to the emotional, behavioral, and cognitive needs of children, and show regard for children's ideas, interests, and perspectives (Pianta et al, 2008). I want to emphasize here that the CLASS instrument examines interactions, so when thinking about Emotional Support, CLASS observations focus on how specific interactions foster an emotionally-supportive classroom environment. Classroom Organization focuses on how teachers interact with children to promote positive behavior, manage classroom interactions to maximize learning time, and keep children engaged in instruction (Pianta et al, 2008). The third domain, Instructional Support, captures how teachers interact with children to provide opportunities for higher order thinking, how teachers provide feedback to children that deepen children's understanding



and persistence, and how teachers support children’s language development (Pianta et al, 2008).

### **The CLASS Emotional Support Domain**

The domain of Emotional Support is further divided into four “dimensions”: Positive Climate, Negative Climate, Teacher Sensitivity, and Regard for Student Perspectives (Pianta et al, 2008). Each of these dimensions is then defined by “indicators” that defines the constituent elements of the dimension, and then within each of these indicators are “behavioral markers” that provide examples of the specific types of interactions that comprise the indicator (Pianta et al, 2008). My study employs a similar methodology, but uses behavioral indicators that go beyond the CLASS framework to include dimensions based on the ethic of care and respect for persons (see Figure 1.1 in Chapter 1).

<b>Emotional Support</b>				
<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Indicators</b>			
Positive Climate	Relationships	Positive Affect	Positive Communication	Respect
Negative Climate	Negative Affect	Punitive Control	Sarcasm/ Disrespect	Severe Negativity
Teacher Sensitivity	Awareness	Responsiveness	Addresses Problems	Student Comfort
Regard for Student Perspectives	Flexibility and Student Focus	Support for Autonomy and Leadership	Student Expression	Restriction of Movement

Figure 3.1 (Pianta et al, 2008)

## Positive Climate

There are four indicators within Positive Climate: *relationships*, *positive affect*, *positive communication*, and *respect* (Pianta et al, 2008). The *relationships* indicator focuses on how teachers develop warm and supportive relationships with children. Specific behaviors within this indicator include close proximity, shared activities, social conversation (talking about life outside of school), and peer assistance (Pianta et al, 2008). The *positive affect* indicator looks at the presence of smiles, laughter, and displays of enthusiasm between teachers and children, whereas the *positive communication* indicator focuses on how teachers convey verbal and physical affection and positive expectations, such as “I know you can draw a wonderful picture!” (Pianta et al, 2008). And finally, the *respect* indicator looks at whether teachers use warm, calm tones when speaking to the children, whether they use language such as “please” and “thank you,” whether cooperation and sharing are present in classroom interactions, and whether teachers establish eye contact when looking at children (Pianta et al, 2008).

## Negative Climate

Negative Climate is its own dimension within the CLASS measure, because it’s possible to have both negative and positive climate within the same classroom (Pianta et al, 2008). Imagine a teacher who is warm one moment and irritated the next—a classroom that is characterized by lots of highs (laughs, enthusiasm, shared activities) as well as lows (irritation, physical control, sarcasm and humiliation). There are four indicators within Negative Climate: *negative affect*, *punitive control*, *sarcasm/disrespect*, and *severe negativity* (Pianta et al, 2008). *Negative affect* looks at whether teachers and

children display negativity such as irritation, anger, and peer aggression (Pianta et al, 2008). *Punitive control* focuses on whether teachers use negative means to establish control such as yelling, making threats, using physical control, or meting out non-physical punishments (Pianta et al, 2008). *Sarcasm/disrespect* considers whether the teacher is sarcastic with children, or teases or humiliates them (Pianta et al, 2008). *Severe negativity*, the last indicator of Negative Climate, looks at whether the teacher victimizes or bullies children, or physically punishes them in ways such as hitting or spanking (Pianta et al, 2008).<sup>6</sup>

### **Teacher Sensitivity**

The Teacher Sensitivity dimension reflects the degree to which the teacher is cognizant and responsive to children's needs in the classroom, both cognitive and emotional (Pianta et al, 2008). The indicators of Teacher Sensitivity are *awareness*, *responsiveness*, *addresses problems*, and *student comfort* (Pianta et al, 2008). *Awareness* looks at whether teachers anticipate potential problems for the children (such as not knowing how to do an activity, or feeling sad when parents drop them off at class), whether teachers notice children's difficulties or lack of understanding, and whether they're aware of children's bids for support or attention (Pianta et al, 2008). The *responsiveness* indicator focuses on how teachers respond to those needs—do teachers validate children's feelings, do they provide comfort, assistance, and individualized

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<sup>6</sup> Research on the CLASS has not included controlled studies that “prove” whether negative climate always leads to lower test scores, nor whether “positive” behaviors always raise them. Although this project does not investigate the relationship between interactions and test scores, I am interested in the impact that these relationships have on the children and the classroom environment, and thus have constructed my study to be comparative in this sense (see section on sampling in this chapter).

support, or are they dismissive, harsh, or invalidating (Pianta et al, 2008)? *Addresses problems* looks specifically at how well teachers are able to help children promptly and effectively, and whether they're able to adequately resolve children's problems or concerns (Pianta et al, 2008). For example, when a crying child approaches the teacher because another child took her toy away, does the teacher address the problem in a way that resolves it for the child, or does the child continue to be upset? Finally, student comfort considers how comfortable children appear in the classroom and with the teacher—do they seek out the teacher for help and comfort, do they freely participate, and do they take risks such as trying activities that are new or difficult (Pianta et al, 2008)?

### **Regard for Student Perspectives**

The last dimension within the Emotional Support domain encompasses how teachers interact with children in ways that support children's independence and honor children's ideas and interests (Pianta et al, 2008). The indicators of Regard for Student Perspectives are *flexibility and student focus*, *support for autonomy and leadership*, *student expression*, and *restriction of movement* (Pianta et al, 2008). *Flexibility and student focus* looks at whether the teacher is flexible in her plans—incorporating children's ideas and following their leads—or whether the teacher is rigid and over-controlling—following through with the teacher's plans at the expense of the children's interests (Pianta et al, 2008). *Support for autonomy and leadership* considers how the teacher creates opportunities for children to have responsibility and authentic roles in the classroom: do children have the opportunity to make choices, to lead lessons, and to do things independently (Pianta et al, 2008)? *Student expression* looks at the degree to which

the teacher encourages children to talk about what is important to them, to express their ideas, and to share how they understand or experience the world around them (Pianta et al, 2008). And lastly, the *restriction of movement* indicator captures whether children have appropriate freedom of movement or whether the teacher rigidly controls children's movement (Pianta et al, 2008).

### **Data Collection**

The primary method of data collection employed in this project is video observation. Collecting data through observation involves both watching and listening to events that unfold within the camera's lens. Viewing my participants through video means that I played the role of "complete observer" rather than "participant observer" (Gold, 1969). I took field notes as I viewed videos; notes are both descriptive and analytical. I described the interactions that took place in the classroom—interactions between teachers and children, between teachers and other teachers, and between children and their peers. The advantage for mediated observation such as this is that I had the opportunity to rewind and watch events again. I was able to obtain a more complex description of the context and nuances involved in these interactions than one would be able to obtain in direct observation at the site, to see what aspects of the interaction might have been missed in the first viewing.

### **Data Analysis**

In most qualitative studies, "there is a constant interplay between collection and analysis that produces a gradual growth of understanding" (Walliman and Buckler,

2008), and this was the case in my study as well. I began analyzing data as soon as it was collected. In the first stage of data analysis, I coded (ascribed labels to units of data), using both an open system (to allow for emerging theories and categories) as well as selective (to analyze data in relation to predetermined theories). For the next stage of analysis, I used a grounded typology (system of classifying concepts) to sort data into emerging themes and categories. Of course, these stages were fluid and unfolded as data continued to be collected; patterns emerging in new data were examined in relation to older data to determine whether codes and typologies remained constant, needed revision, or had to be set aside all together to allow for different patterns of categorization. I then brought these systems of classification to my next round of data collection to see if they held up (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Miles and Huberman, 1994; Strauss, 1987; Strauss and Corbin, 1990).

The concepts of validity and reliability generally refer to the “trustworthiness” of the data and analysis (Walliman and Buckler, 2008). Validity looks at whether the researcher has produced accurate findings and conclusions, and reliability may be understood as the likelihood that another researcher operating under the same conditions would yield a consistent result. While validity and reliability do not hold the same importance they do in quantitative research, speaking to the trustworthiness of the data is still a necessary endeavor. I strengthened the accuracy of my data through triangulation, searching for disconfirming evidence (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p. 263; Philips and Burbules, 2000, p. 80), and the presentation of “rich” data: “Rich data are data that are detailed and complete enough that they provide a full and revealing picture of what is

going on.... For observation, rich data are the product of detailed, descriptive note taking about the specific, concrete events that you observe” (Maxwell, 1998, p. 94).

As Eisner (1983) noted, the notion that there is no unifying theory of knowledge (positivistic or nonpositivistic) does not necessarily mean that knowledge production is impossible.

Because different theories provide different views of the world, it does not follow that there is no way of appraising the value or credibility of a view. First, we can ask what a particular theoretical view enables us to do, that is, we can determine its instrumental utility. Second, we can appraise the consistency of its conclusions with the theoretical premises on which they are based. Third, even if those conclusions are logically consistent with their premises, we may reject the premises. Fourth, we can determine whether there are more economical interpretations of the data than those provided by any particular theoretical view. Fifth, we can judge the degree to which it hangs together. And sixth, we can assess the view on aesthetic grounds: How elegant is the view? How strongly do we respond to it? (p. 14)

As Jackson et al (1993) wrote, “The ultimate test of the insightfulness and verifiability of what each of us sees from our individual perspectives is not whether others have spontaneously seen the same thing on their own, but whether they can be brought to appreciate and understand what we have seen after we have described it to them” (pp. 65-66).

### **Researcher as Instrument**

As in the case in qualitative studies, the researcher is the instrument—I was the filter through which data are collected. I tried to be alert to the ways in which my perspectives shaped my understanding and interpretation of events. To speak to my training in this regard, I have taken several courses in qualitative and ethnographic

techniques, including basic and advanced qualitative research, ethnographic methods, narrative inquiry, mixed methods, and discourse analysis. I was poised to pursue my data collection with a deep understanding of my biases and a commitment to remaining evidence-based in my descriptive chapters.

### **Parameters of the Study**

As my review of the literature has shown, caring and respect for persons are rarely studied in classrooms—to the extent that it is, it is treated in a cursory manner as one of many indications of positive climate. Empirical research focuses on what we can see and hear—and caring and respect for persons, as concepts, cannot be seen or heard. However, we *can* observe respectful and caring behaviors, and we can therefore infer the presence of caring and respect for persons (as ethical concepts or ideas) from other observable phenomena, such as those listed in Figure 1.1. A principle element of this study is looking at the ways in which caring and respect for persons are made manifest in the classroom, but there are many questions that won't be answered as a result of this study, such as: What motivates teachers to act in respectful ways? How do teachers' respectful intentions influence their actions? Further research (interviews, surveys and observations, ethnographies) would illuminate the answers to these questions and provide a more complete picture of the ways in which the concepts of caring and respect for persons are made manifest in classroom environments.

It is important to emphasize that this study is not a commentary on these specific individuals or their character, but is meant to simply illuminate the kinds of interactions that shape children's experiences in preschool. I attempted to mediate my



biases by using ethical criteria as the guide for my analysis. Teachers' identifiable information was kept confidential pursuant to IRB protocols and reviews (see Appendix).

## CHAPTER 4

### FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

This chapter presents the findings for the empirical portion of this study—six video segments that were selected to exemplify the types of behaviors outlined in Figure 1.1 (see Chapter 1). These segments using the process and criteria outlined in Chapter 3. Transcriptions and descriptions are provided for each segment. Descriptions focus on the empirical findings for each interaction—that is, they are largely limited to observable behaviors (what may be seen or heard). Each description is followed by a preliminary analysis, then a discussion that explores the ways in which the data are illuminated (or not) by Noddings’ and Kant’s conceptualizations of caring and respect.

#### Video Analyses of Caring and Respect in Early Childhood Classrooms

##### Clip 1: “It’s My Rug; It’s My Time.”

<b>Transcription</b>
((several children shouting out, pointing at book))
Teacher: Shh. Okay. Okay. I’m gonna finish readin’ the story.
((several children speak out, inaudible)) ((one child sits up on knees))
Child: I can’t see.
Teacher: Okay. I gotta... ((raises voice)) If you sit back and sit on your bottoms... ((child calls out, inaudible, teacher reaches out and pushes? Pinches? the child to her right)) says with teeth clenched, “On your bottom, now!”
Child: This isn’t my spot. [or, “you’re sitting in my spot”?]
Teacher: Back ((puts hand in air, palm toward child)). Back.
Teacher: Then you need to turn around and sit on your bottom.
Teacher: Aiden, I’m gonna need you to move back.
Teacher: And I’m gonna need everybody to move back... including you, Alevi.
Teacher: ((lifts book up and turns her head to look at it))
Teacher: ((reads)) I count my aunts and uncles who visit in their cars... ((turns page))
Teacher: ((reads)) All my favorite playmates, who like to stare at stars ((teacher pauses, holding book up))

One child: Eight.
More children: Eight.
Teacher: ((turns page, not saying anything))
Teacher: I count my special friends ((T raises voice)), and the stories I have read...
Children: ((Interrupt T, calling out, some inaudible, some saying “Nine!”))
Teacher: Licks finger, looks to book to turn the page.
Child: ((to T’s right sits up on knees, leans forward, and points at something in the book. Two other children also point to book))
Teacher: Very good ((in response to child who said “Nine”)).
((Other children are calling out as T is about to turn page. Child with pigtails wearing blue in front of teacher reaches out to either point to something or move book so she can see. T drops book to her lap and looks at children, as children continue to call out))
Teacher: I’m gonna say this one more time. For the last time. ((Voice is raised, gets sharper, face is tight with mouth frowning)) ((right hand points and gestures for emphasis)) It’s my rug. It’s my time. You’re listening to me.
((T pauses, children are silent, with T frowning at children))
((T turns back to book, licks finger, turns page. Children are silent))
Teacher: ((reads)) And my cuddle teddy bears who snuggles in my bed.
Teacher: ((licks finger, prepares to turn page))
Child: ((One C calls out)) Ten ((a couple other children then call out “Ten,” but voices are quieter and sound hesitant or unenthusiastic))
Teacher: ((T turns page, doesn’t look at or respond to children)) I’m a very lucky person, as anyone can see... ((turns page))
Teacher: My buddies can be ((difficulty reading text)) counted as they... can always... I’m sorry ((pats her own leg)) my buddies can be counted and they can always count on me.
((T brings book down in front of her. One C begins counting, “One, two...” T joins in, “Two, three,” then other children join in, “four, five, six, seven, eight...”))

**Description.** In this video, the teacher and children are sitting on a rug, with the children in front of the teacher. The teacher is holding a counting book and reading it out loud. The teacher has just read a page and several children are commenting on it—some sitting up on their knees and pointing toward the book. The teacher shushes them and tells the children she is going to continue reading the story.

When children continue talking and one calls out, “I can’t see,” the teacher raises her voice and tells the children to sit back and sit “on your bottoms.” The teacher reaches

out to one child in front of her and says with clenched teeth, “On your bottom, now!” as she pushes the child. When a child calls out, “This isn’t my spot,” the teacher ignores her, simply repeating, “Back.”

The teacher then resumes reading the story. While some yawn, stretch, or gaze off into space, others strain to move so they can see the pictures. The teacher keeps her eyes on the story, and despite her earlier warning, children start to call out again (“Eight!”). The teacher ignores their comments, turning the page. When a child calls out “Nine,” the teacher responds, “Very good,” but then drops her book when other children call out as she’s turning the page.

At this point, the teacher’s face gets tight and angry, her mouth frowning. She raises her voice and says sharply, “I’m gonna say this one more time. For the last time. It’s my rug. It’s my time. You’re listening to me.” The children fall silent, and the teacher resumes reading. It’s not long before some children call out again (“Ten”), but their voices are hesitant and lack enthusiasm. The teacher doesn’t respond, just continues reading, then apologizes when she stumbles with the text “I’m sorry”). When the teacher finishes reading the last page, one child starts counting: “One, two....” The teacher starts counting with the child, and then the other children join in (“Three, four, five...”).

Throughout the video, the teacher and children’s affect is flat, except for when the teacher is reprimanding the children—at those points, the teacher’s face is tight, her mouth frowning. At no point in the video do we see smiles from the teacher or children,

or any indications that the teacher and children are connecting with one another in a positive way.

**Analysis.** In this video sample, the teacher and children are not emotionally connected to one another. The teacher does not use a warm voice when speaking to the children, she rarely addresses them by name, and gives no indication of a personal relationship to children or positive comments except for saying “Very good” to one child. There is no evidence of physical or verbal affection. The teacher does not appear to be enjoying her time with the children; instead, she appears focused on getting through the book, and becomes angry (clenching her teeth, raising her voice, pushing children) when the children interfere with that goal by interrupting her reading.

The teacher positions herself as the only person of value in the classroom: “It’s my rug. It’s my time. You’re listening to me.” Her statement reflects that she doesn’t value what the children are thinking or feeling, and that she is the owner of the physical and emotional space.

For the most part, the teacher shows a lack of awareness of the children—she rarely makes eye contact with children, and with one or two exceptions, does not respond to their comments. When children assert a problem (“I can’t see,” “This isn’t my spot”), the teacher does not acknowledge, validate, or problem-solve the issue with the individual child; instead, she issues reprimands: “Then you need to turn around and sit on your bottom.”

The teacher is inconsistent in setting rules and redirecting children's behavior. She tells children to move back, but then doesn't seem to notice when most children stay where they are. She singles out individual children ("On your bottom, now!") without any clear rationale. Although she has told the children they may not talk as she reads, she praises one child for doing so: "Very good."

While the teacher notices on two occasions that the children are having a hard time sitting still, she does not acknowledge or respond to their needs (to move, to interact, to be involved). Instead, the teacher reacts with anger, using a demonstration of authority to force their compliance. In fact, the teacher's statement "I'm going to say this one more time. For the last time" implies a threat. What makes this the last time? What will happen when children speak up again?

The teacher's emotional response to children is also inconsistent. She appears to switch roles without warning, moving from teacher to enforcer to punisher and then back again, making it difficult for the children to understand her expectations or her attitudes toward them.

Only at one point in the video does the teacher appear to relate to the children as an equal: when she stumbles with reading the text, she says automatically, "I'm sorry," as she taps her knee. But rather than a genuine moment of relatedness, this appears to be more of a reflex.

**Discussion.** The teacher's behaviors in this segment are largely devoid of caring and respect as indicated in Figure 1.1. For the most part, the teacher ignores children and

treats them as objects who are only of interest when they interrupt her reading. The teacher's tone of voice when reading (calm) is markedly different from her tone when speaking to the children (harsh, irritated). Her method of control is authoritarian and punitive: she posits herself as the locus of power and value in the classroom ("It's my rug; it's my time; you're listening to me") and pushes and threatens children when they do not stay silent.

There is little evidence of Kant's respect for persons in this interaction. While the teacher's behavior suggests that she assumes the children are in control of their actions (by ordering them to back up and stay quiet, rather than thinking that they are incapable of complying), there is no evidence that the teacher believes the children have good reasons for acting as they do (for example, that they have worthy ideas to contribute as they read, or that it is reasonable that they are having trouble sitting as she has directed). There is no evidence that the teacher treats the children as ends in themselves—that is, acting toward them in such a way that the teacher's desired outcome is clear and gives the children the opportunity to decide whether they wish to participate toward that end.

As for Noddings' definition of caring, in this teacher's behaviors, there is no outward display of empathy toward the children, no sense that the teacher is trying to understand or contribute positively to the experiences of the children. Nor is there any evidence that the children, the "cared-for," perceive that the teacher values or cares for the children. In response to the teacher, the children almost seem to shrink: their voices become more hesitant and less enthusiastic. It is as though they continue calling out not because of, but in spite of the teacher's reaction.

Perhaps though, the teacher believes that reading the book while the children remain silent is in the children's best interests. Kant and Noddings would both argue that in order for this action to actually *be* in the children's best interests, there must be some indication that the children are knowingly and willingly contributing toward that end, or that the teacher's judgment comes through a genuine understanding of the needs of the children.

## Clip 2: Where Butterflies Go When It Rains

Transcription
T: About where does butterflies go.
T: Where does butterflies go when it rains? ((looks up from book and out at children))
C: ((inaudible)) ((child coughing))
T: You think they go home? Okay.
C: I think they go to McDonald's to hide from rain.
T: You think they go to McDonald's to hide from rain? Anybody else?
T: Where do you think they go, Asia? ((T watches child))
C: ((answer inaudible))
T: ((inaudible))
T: Cole. Where do you think they go?
C: I think they stay at home forever and it stops raining.
T: You think they stay at home until it stop raining. Okay, very good.
T: Kayla. ((T watches child))
C: I think they go home and... ((inaudible))
T: You think they go home and sleep when it's raining ((as she's speaking, her eyes shift to another child))
T: Uhhh... Angie.
C: I think they go ((inaudible))
T: You think they go where?
C: ((inaudible))
T: To school? Okay. ((tone doesn't really affirm child's answer—has the connotation of tolerance))
T: Anybody else?
((Teacher reads book—video cut))
Teacher: Roy, have a seat on the floor. In front of the... in front. With your friends. Thank you.
Child: ...and the snake was there, and he was gonna eat the squirrel. ((Teacher's eyes are scanning the room while the girl talks))



((Teacher looks across the group of children to a boy in the back))
T: May we find out what's going on with Cole over there? What's the problem, Cole? ((voice sounds impatient))
((The children all go quiet and turn around to look at Cole, and after a pause, we hear a child's voice say something in a whiny voice (inaudible)).
Teacher: ((makes a face with her lips scrunched up)) Is that a reason to show tears? Speak up loud, just say, "I know, I know." Would you like to stand up, tell us something Cole, what do you... what animal or insect did you know that starts with the letter B, and you gotta tell me, nice and loud, I need that big boy voice you got ((teacher makes exaggerated facial expression with a big smile)).
Teacher: Can you think of one?
((A girl near the teacher beats on the side of the drum. The teacher doesn't seem to notice))
((Long pause—boy is off camera))
T: ((gets big smile on her face and grins at the other teacher)) Awww... But you wanted a chance, but that's okay ((T bangs on a drum in time with her words)).
Second teacher: I got one Cole.
T: Ooh! Okay, let's everybody stop for a minute and just think. B-buh. B-buh. B-buh. B-buh ((beating out a rhythm on the drum to her words)).
((The three children sitting closest to the teacher try to bang on the drum too, which the teacher doesn't seem to notice.))
((The other teacher goes over to Cole and talks to him ((inaudible)).
T: Cole got one! See, when you think about it...
((Cole stands up, second teacher has her arm around him as if she's helping him stand.))
Cole: ((quietly)) Blackbird!
Teacher: A blackbird! ((she raises her arms up in the air)) Woah, Cole! (yelling))

**Description.** In this clip, the teacher and children are sitting on the rug. The teacher is about to read the book *Where Does the Butterfly Go When It Rains?* Before she starts reading, she asks the question, "Where does butterflies go when it rains?" [sic] One boy comments that he thinks butterflies go home. The teacher repeats his statement: "You think they go home? Okay," and another child comments that she thinks the butterflies go to McDonald's. The teacher responds, "You think they go to McDonald's to hide from rain?" and then asks other children if they want to venture a guess. Several other children offer their ideas, which the teacher typically repeats before moving on to

the next child. The teacher smiles occasionally when children give their answers, and an adult off camera (presumably the assistant teacher) laughs when a boy says that he thinks butterflies go to McDonald's.

When the teacher calls on children, she refers to them by name, and makes eye contact as the children share their ideas. The teacher is in close proximity to the children and on their level (they all sit on the floor), although the teacher is some distance away from the children. There are no signs of physical affection or closeness, and no evidence of verbal affection other than a "Very good" in response to one child's answer. The teacher's voice is calm throughout.

After reading the book, the teacher sets up a poster board, and asks the children to brainstorm insects and animals that start with the letter B. One girl is telling the teacher something ("and the snake was there, and he was gonna eat the squirrel"); the teacher, however, is scanning the room and says, "May we find out what's going on with Cole over there?" The children all go quiet, and after a pause, we hear a child's voice say something in a whiny voice (inaudible, and the child is off camera). The teacher scrunches up her face and replies, "Is that a reason to show tears? Speak up loud, just say, 'I know, I know,' would you like to stand up, tell us something Cole, what do you... what animal or insect do you know that starts with the letter B, and you gotta tell me, nice and loud, I need that big boy voice you got. Can you think of one?" The boy doesn't respond, so after a moment, the teacher gets a big smile on her face and grins at the other teacher, then says, "But you wanted a chance, but that's okay" as she bangs on a drum. The other teacher then goes over to Cole and tells him a word that starts with the letter B,

then directs him to stand up and share the word. When Cole quietly says, “Blackbird,” the lead teacher throws her arms up in the air and shouts, “Woa, Cole!”

**Analysis.** In the first part of this video, the teacher gives the children the opportunity to share their ideas, and regularly acknowledges their responses by repeating them. However, the teacher doesn’t offer the children any feedback about their ideas, or ask them additional questions to further elicit or understand what they are thinking. Children aren’t given an opportunity to interact with one another; the format of the interaction is strictly question-answer/teacher-child rather than a conversation. The activity is completely teacher-directed; the teacher has chosen the book and the children are expected to pay attention and follow her agenda.

The teacher appears amused by some children’s answers (she smiles when a child says she thinks butterflies go to school, and another adult laughs when a child says butterflies go to McDonald’s, even though the affect of both children is serious), but because she doesn’t share her amusement with the children and they don’t seem to think anything is funny, her enjoyment appears to be *at* the children’s expense rather than something she is sharing *with* them. The teacher doesn’t make any efforts to get the children to think about why butterflies might go somewhere when it rains, or to help the children evaluate the ideas they offer in a way that would lead to better understanding and an opportunity to reason.

In the second part of the video, a girl is telling the teacher a story when the teacher notices that a boy in the back of the room is upset. The teacher interrupts the girl

(without any acknowledgement or offer to come back to her) to impatiently ask the boy what is wrong. Rather than speaking with the boy privately, the teacher makes the interaction public: all the other children turn around to see what is happening. From the teacher's response, it's clear that the boy is crying (he's off camera), and the teacher's response shames him for displaying his feelings: "Is that a reason to show tears? Speak up loud, just say, 'I know, I know.' Would you like to stand up, tell us something Cole, what do you... what animal or insect do you know that starts with the letter B, and you gotta tell me, nice and loud, I need that big boy voice you got." The implication is that Cole has not been acting like a "big boy."

Not surprisingly, having been humiliated, Cole does not want to say anything more. The teacher seems to think this is funny (she turns to the other teacher and grins), but does not persist. Her lack of gravitas during the interaction is exemplified by putting her words to music as she beats on the drum ("You wanted a chance. But that's okay").

The second teacher approaches Cole and provides him with a B word to share (blackbird), but there is a noticeable lack of enthusiasm as he stands up to say the word aloud. His body language shows reluctance, and his voice is quiet. The lead teacher makes a big show out of Cole's contribution ("Woa, Cole!")—but the boy is simply a puppet, saying the word he has been prompted to say. The teachers' response to his tears is to give him a word to repeat and to celebrate his mimicry as a big success.

**Discussion.** In the first half of this video, there are some signs of caring and respect. The teacher gives the children some attention by asking them a question ("Where

does butterflies go when it rains?”) and then giving several of them a chance to respond. She shows that she is listening to their responses when she repeats what they have said (“You think they stay at home until it stop raining”), and her voice is warm and calm. However, the teacher does not ask children any follow-up questions about their ideas, nor does she provide any feedback beyond the perfunctory “Very good” or “Okay,” suggesting that the teacher is not genuinely interested in what the children are thinking. On one occasion, the teacher is in the middle of repeating a child’s response when her eyes shift to the next child with a hand raised, showing that even as she acknowledges the child’s idea, her attention is focused on calling on the next child.

In one sense, the teacher is showing respect for persons here because she is providing the children with an opportunity to share their ideas. But there is no indication that the teacher is furthering the children’s capability to reason—she does not ask children to explain or support their answers (for example, by asking, “Why do you think butterflies go to McDonald’s?”), nor does she help the children think more deeply about the concepts that underlie the premise of the book (“Why don’t they stay in the rain?” “What happens when we stand in the rain?” “How does it feel to be wet and cold?”). The teacher’s perfunctory responses to children’s ideas demonstrate a commitment to children’s participation on a minimal level, but do not show any genuine respect for their ideas or capacity to reason.

In the second half of the video, the teacher calls attention to a child (Cole) who is crying in the back of the room. She makes no attempt to deal with the upset child quietly, instead, she publicly focuses the entire classroom on him: “May we find out what’s going

on with Cole over there? What's the problem, Cole?" The teacher's voice sounds impatient, and her response is more irritable than caring. Once the teacher realizes the boy is upset because he had something to say, she invalidates his feelings when she asks, "Is that a reason to show tears?" Respect for persons would indeed dictate that the boy had a good reason for acting as he did! Here too, Noddings' ethic of care is violated. The teacher is unable to empathize with the child, to apprehend what he is experiencing. If she were able to "put herself in his shoes," she might consider that when she (the teacher) sheds tears, she has a good reason for feeling upset, and that an authority figure (or anyone for that matter) making a public display of the incident and suggesting that it's wrong to cry would make her feel humiliated and ashamed. However, the teacher goes on to encourage the boy to share his comment, and when he indicates he doesn't want to (not surprisingly!), another teacher prompts the boy with a word (blackbird) so he has something to share. When the boy stands up and reluctantly repeats the word, the lead teacher throws her arms up in the air and shouts out, "Woah, Cole!" My interpretation of the reasoning behind her reaction is something like this—the boy was in tears because he was unable to share his comment, then he didn't want to share his comment, so when the second teacher gave him a word to say and he shared it, problem solved! If this is indeed along the lines of the teacher's own thinking (which, unfortunately, we cannot know), it shows an overly simplistic reasoning on the teacher's part, that fails to take into account the more complex factors that determine an individual's response to any given situation. This leads me to wonder, how can a teacher respect children's capacity to reason when she lacks the capacity herself? And how can a teacher attribute the best possible motives

to a child's actions if her notion of childhood is paternalistic (in the sense that it implies an attitude of superiority) and she is unable or unwilling to better understand the internal world of the child? These ideas will be further explored in the next chapter.

### Clip 3: Voting on Trikes and Climbers

<b>Transcription</b>
T: So here's the problem that I'm having. The problem I'm having is I'm not sure what to put on the wall.
T: I have two choices, and I thought what we could do is to do some voting.
T: Do you remember what voting means? Voting means...
((child says something, T nods))
T: You sometimes do a little coloring with it...
((C calls out "Writing!"—teacher nods, and wags her finger))
T: And we sometimes do writing with it... voting means that we will ask each person what they would like.
T: And then, after ((inaudible)) we will do what the most of the group wants to do.
C: Can you write our names?
T: Well, you might look at this chart and notice... ((inaudible))
C: Where's my name? ((T points to name on paper))
C: Where's my name?
C: Do I got a name?
T: There you go. ((Responds to child who asked about his name)) We'll find our names on ((inaudible))
((Children clamor forward to look at the paper))
T: So yeah. Please sit down so everyone can see ((puts hand gently on child's shoulder)).
C: There's my name!
T: That is your name. Abigail... That's your name.
((T pushes paper toward a child)) Dylan, can you find your name?
((Child points to section of paper))
T: Dylan found his name.
T: Margaret go back to your spot. ((inaudible—T tries to get children to move back to their spots))
C: I only found my name ((??))
T: Sit with your legs in a pretzel, that will help your body stay in its spot.
T: Margaret, did you find your name on this list?
((Cut video—teacher gives each child a chance to find his/her name on the list))
T: Okay, so the question at the top says, ((pointing to each word as she reads it)) "What will be on the... ((inaudible))
T: And these are the two choices. ((circles something on paper)) Does anyone have any

idea what this word looks like? And I kinda drew a little picture.
C: Wagon.
T: Okay, it looks like wagon, but it starts with a T,   t  ,   t
C: ((inaudible))
T: ((points at child)) Trikes. Trikes is one choice. There will be an activity with it.
C: Tools!
T: Trikes and tools would be one activity. That would be one choice. Okay?
((child in assistant teacher's lap lies down and stretches out))
T: The other choice is this choice. ((inaudible))
T: Does anybody have any idea what this is? ((points to part of paper))
C: Climber
T: Climber, the ((inaudible)).. with painter plasts ((??))
T: So, climber with painter plys, or trikes with tools.
C: Trikes with tools.
T: Okay. I'm not sure what children will pick.
C: Climber.
T: We will have both things. What if we, what if we umm... we can only have one activity today ((holds up one finger)).
C: Umm... trikes and tools.
C: Umm, eh... climber.
T: Yeah, okay, some children are saying "climber," some children are saying "trikes and tools."
((Several children shout out their preferred activity))
T: Okay.
C: Climber.
T: We can only have one today.
((Boy in blue, who has had a serious expression on his face as other children have called out answers, inhales, sets his lips, and puts his finger in front of his face as if he has a point to make.))
T: Does that mean that we won't have the other one ever?
((A few children shake their head)) One child says, "No."
T: It means that we'll have the other one sometime... ((inaudible))
T: But today, we will have the one that, that the most children vote for.
C: Uh---climber!
T: You think... right now, has anybody done any voting? Has anybody written anything down here?
T: We don't know yet what it will be.
T: Okay. Let's look on this list. Margaret, your name is at the top of this list. ((points to place on paper))
T: Where, where would you, what would you like to have? Would you like to have the trikes? Or the climber?
((Margaret gets out of the assistant teacher's lap and moves up to look at paper))
((Margaret points to place on paper))



T: You'd like to have the climber. ((Margaret points to a different spot on the paper)) T: Oh—the trikes.
T: ((handing Margaret the marker)) Okay. Can you put an X in the box that is for... right there.
T: ((puts hand on Margaret's wrist)) I'll show you. Can you make a mark in this box right here? That says, underneath the part that says...
((Other children crowd close to see. Teacher leans forward and pushes them back))
T: You can make anything. You can make an X, you can make a circle, you can make an N, you can make a line, you can make an I... yeah, that works.
T: ((takes marker from Margaret)) Great. Margaret cast her vote. That means she made a mark to let us know “that is what I'm hoping to have trikes.”
T: Okay. Uh the next name on this list is what, whose name.
C: Josh.
T: Joshua. Can Joshua help us make this decision today?
((Several children say no))
T: No. He's not here. So we won't...
C: Me, me! ((tapping her chest))
C: Me, the second one.
T: ((points to paper)) You know, your name is next. We'll leave Joshua's name, we'll leave that section blank. Okay.
((All children take a turn casting their votes))
T: In the trike column, let's see what happened. Trikes. How many marks are there in the trike column? One, two, three ((T and children count together)). Okay. Three children want to have trikes.
T: Okay. And let's see in this column. One, two, three ((teacher and children count together)).
T: Three children ((inaudible)) the climber today.
T: ((sits back)). Hmm.
C: We could decide like...
T: ((puts hands with elbows bent and palms facing up in front of her)) What do we do? Because we both... three and three.
T: There wasn't one that someone... we wanted more than the other one. What do we do?
C: Oh I know what!
T: What?
C: We could choose what the grownups like to have.
T: Okay, we could ask the grownups for their opinions about what we could have.
((Boy taps the girl who just offered the idea on the shoulder, saying)) That's a good clue, Chloe.
T: ((to boy)) You're thinking that would be a good clue. You think that would really work ((boy nods)).
T: Okay. Because ((inaudible)) some other grownups that would be available to help make the decision.
((Margaret stands up and returns to assistant teacher's lap))

C: Anne.
T: Or Anne. Maybe we could ask Anne. That would be casting the deciding vote.
C: ((turns to someone off camera)) Anne! ((inaudible)) ... to have trikes or climber.
((All the children turn to look at Anne ((still off camera))
((A woman from off camera comes over and sits down with group))
T: Anne, we have a little problem and we thought we would put it to a vote.

**Description.** In this video, the teachers and children are sitting on the carpet. There are two teachers and six children. The lead teacher announces that she has a problem, which is that she's not sure which of two activities to offer during the children's free time. As a result, she says that she will put the matter to a vote.

The teacher asks if anyone remembers what voting is, and a couple children share their ideas which the teacher incorporates into her definition: "We sometimes do writing with it.... Voting means that we will ask each person what they would like... and then... we will do what the most of the group wants to do."

One child asks if the teacher can write their names, and the teacher points out that she has their names listed on a piece of paper that she's placed in the middle of the floor. At that point, several children clamor forward to look at the paper, asking "Where's my name?" The teacher then gives each child a chance to locate his/her name on the paper before continuing with her explanation of the voting process.

Once the children have had a chance to find their names, the teacher reads out the two activity choices listed on the paper. Children immediately begin calling out their choices ("Trikes!" "Climber!"). The teacher acknowledges the children's comments by repeating what they have said, but reiterates that only one of the two activities will be

offered today. Because they are putting the decision to a vote, today's activity will be the activity that most children select. The teacher then asks the children what will happen to the activity that doesn't win: "Does that mean that we won't have the other one ever?" The children shake their heads, and the teacher affirms that the other activity will be offered later in the week.

The teacher then calls on the children one-by-one to cast their votes. The teacher provides different levels of support to each child: when one child needs help locating her name, the teacher points to it on the page; when another child isn't sure where to cast her vote, the teacher guides her hand to the right column.

On several occasions, as children take their turns, other children move forward to better see the page, and the teacher redirects them back to their places: she gently pushes them back, saying "Please sit down so everyone can see." "Margaret, go back to your spot." "Sit with your legs in a pretzel—that will help your body stay in its spot."

Once the children have all cast their votes, the teacher asks how many marks are in each column. When the children and teachers count together, they realize that each activity has received three votes. The teacher asks, "What do we do?" then explains, "There wasn't one that someone... we wanted more than the other one. What do we do?" One child suggests that they could ask the adults to decide, and another child agrees that it's a good idea. A third child asks Anne, an adult from off camera, to help them decide which activity to choose.

**Analysis.** In this interaction, the teacher begins by offering the children some control over what they'll be doing in the classroom. Rather than choosing one of two activities for them, she puts it to a vote. However, the choice is limited: the teacher has already decided which two activities are to be considered, and how the decision will be reached (though she permits children to influence the process later on when the voting results in a tie).

It is clear that the teacher's agenda here is not to make the most efficient decision about the activity (it would have been easier, for example, for the teacher to make the decision herself, or to ask children to raise their hands for the one they prefer without explaining what voting is). Instead, the teacher takes the time to define voting for the children, and to help them understand the concept in a way that is meaningful to them (by allowing them to participate in the voting process on an issue they care about—one of the activities offered during free time).

The teacher encounters some challenges to her agenda: first, children show interest in finding their names on the paper. Although we see a moment of frustration on the teacher's face when the children clamor forward and all begin speaking at once, she then takes the time to allow each child to find his or her name on the paper. In other words, when the teacher's agenda conflicts with child interest, she honors the children's desire to see their names and allows them to do so. She does so in a manner that reasserts her authority—she directs children back to their places, then allows children to find their names one at a time. In this sense, the teacher meets the children's needs (to see their names) while maintaining social control.

At several points, children move forward to better see the paper in the middle of the floor. The teacher repeatedly directs children to move back to their spots without acknowledging the motives that have caused them to move forward. On one occasion, she provides a rationale for her redirection: “Please sit down so everyone can see,” another time she offers a suggestion to help the child meet the teacher’s directive: “Sit with your legs in a pretzel; that will help your body stay in its spot.”

In this video sample, children in this classroom appear comfortable sharing their ideas: “Trikes!” “Climbers!” “There’s my name!” “Oh, I know!” and the teacher generally responds to their ideas by providing children with feedback or encouraging them to say more (for example, when a child says “Oh, I know what,” the teacher encourages her to continue, asking “What?” When another child comments, “That’s a good clue, Chloe,” the teacher acknowledges the boy’s opinion by responding, “You’re thinking that would be a good clue. You think that would really work.”

While there are no signs of physical affection between the lead teacher and children, the ease of the conversation and level of child engagement suggest children are comfortable with her. One child spends most of the time sitting in the second teacher’s lap, and children quickly suggest that the adults help them decide which activity to choose (and then solicit a third adult to participate, showing that they can rely on their teachers for comfort and support.

**Discussion.** In this video clip, there are many indications of caring and respect. The teacher frequently speaks to the children calmly and with warmth in her voice. Her

choice of activity—giving the children an opportunity to vote on one of two possibilities for free time—invites the children to share their desires and shape the outcome of the decision. By explaining how she came to the decision to hold a vote and inviting the children to participate, the teacher is, in a Kantian sense, making the end (deciding on the activity) transparent to the children, and giving them the freedom to participate toward that end.

When the teacher reminds the children to move back to their spots, she sometimes provides a rationale (“So everyone can see”) or offers advice to help children comply with her directive (“Sit with your legs in a pretzel, that will help your body stay in its spot.”) Providing a rationale helps the children develop their capacity to reason (Kant’s categorical imperative) and to empathize (Noddings’ ethic of care). Even though the children move from their spots on several occasions, the teacher remains reasonably calm and pleasant as she redirects them, and her tip to one child to “sit with your legs in a pretzel” suggests that she understands that they’re finding it hard to stay put—in other words, as the one-caring, she is apprehending the reality of the other (Noddings, 1984, p. 14).

The teacher’s explanation of the voting process is another example of both caring and respect. First, she asks the children what they remember about voting, giving them a chance to assert their own knowledge before filling it in with her own. Her definition incorporates their comments (writing and coloring), showing that she values their ideas. By presenting the children an abstract term, the teacher demonstrates that she thinks the children are capable of connecting this concept to their own practical experience, and that

it's important to provide them with an opportunity to do so in a way that is meaningful to them.

The children's behavior indicates that they are "cared-for"—that they experience their teacher as "one-caring." Noddings writes, "Over time, caring establishes in the cared-for an attitude of receptiveness. Not only does this lead the child to take on the position of one-caring with his peers but also leads to his openness to ideas and things" (Noddings, 1984, p. 60), and this is clearly demonstrated in this video. Children openly share their ideas, and when the vote is tied, one child offers the solution "We could ask the grownups for their opinions about what we could have." This girl demonstrates trust in the adults, as well as her ability to problem solve, an important part of reasoning. When her peer responds that he likes her idea, we see the ability to evaluate her solution (yet another indication of reasoning), his openness, and his developing role as one-caring himself.

#### **Clip 4: Corduroy's Buttons**

<b>Transcription</b>
((Teacher and children are sitting at art table. The "activity" is for children to put paper cut-outs of overalls and place them over a paper cut-out of a teddy bear, and then glue buttons onto the overalls. However, the overalls don't fit right, so the teacher has to take each pair and cut them so the children can fold the straps over their teddy bear cut-outs.))
((Child on right looks frustrated, says something inaudible))
T: You don't try to do it. Everybody else try to do it.
T: No, you ain't did nothing yet.
T: You ain't got nothing on it... pick up the buttons. No.
T: Pick up your buttons.
T: Will you leave it? Cause look what you're doing.
((T takes cut out from boy and puts overalls on.))
T: I want you to umm, ((inaudible)) out the buttons.

((Child reaches for pile of buttons in the middle of the table and picks up a button.))
((Teacher puts the paper she's been working on in front of the boy. He puts his button on the paper.))
((Teacher reaches out and grabs the boy's hand, yanks it back.))
T: ((glaring at child)) You got to put glue on, and.... Two buttons like that. Here!
((Second child has stopped working and is staring blankly down at the table.))
((Teacher moves to the chair next to the second child. She picks up the paper he's been working on and sets it down in front of her to look at. Boy turns around and starts watching something behind him.))
((Teacher cuts strips from the paper overalls.))
T: You need to look at what you're doing, Joey. ((The boy has nothing to do since the teacher is working with his cut-outs. He stares blankly down at the table)).
T: ((After a pause)) Pick out your buttons.
((Teacher glues overalls on teddy bear while second child picks a button.))
((Teacher puts popsicle stick in glue and looks as though she is going to hand it to the child. He reaches for it, but the teacher pulls back her hand and takes the button from him instead. She then glues the button on the overalls while the child watches.))
((The teacher stands up and walks away. The second child stands up and walks away in a different direction.))
((Video cut—a different set of children approach the table. The teacher is off camera))
T: Okay, come Asha, Karina,...
((One child approaches an empty seat and starts to sit down.))
T: ((Voice sounds irritated)) Elijah... that's my seat.
((Child moves to another seat.))
T: ((Notices a child picking up some materials from the table)) Do not do that. Pick up a marker and make your eyes and nose and mouth. Get a marker. Pick a marker, Karina ((irritated)). Make an eyes, nose, and mouth.
C: I did.
T: You did? Make a mouth, now. That's the nose. Make the mouth. I didn't ask you to do nothing else. If you finished making it give it to me, put it down. Give me your marker. I want you to pick out two buttons. I got buttons right here. Pick out two buttons. No.
T: ((snatches marker from girl on right.)) You didn't finish. Look at this. I said two. Not three. Two. Two. You see how mine is? Put your clothes on like this.
T: ((To girl on her left)) You're gonna have to wait.
((Girl sitting across from teacher picks up glue stick.))
T: ((leans forward toward girl, says in a harsh voice)) I didn't tell you to glue nothing, did I? Did I say do that? I said wait, listen, okay?
((Girl quickly drops the glue stick, raises her eyes to teacher then casts them down on the table and waits.))
((Video cut—another group of children is at the art table with teacher.))
((Child in yellow looks confused. Teacher snatches his cut out from him. Girl to his left rubs her eyes, watching teacher with a flat face.))



T: Put the glue on... have you got your buttons? You have to wait.
((Child from off camera walks up to the teacher.))
T: ((glances at child)) No, I'm busy.
T: ((Looks at the child sitting next to her)) Put glue on your, on your um, put glue on... no. Put glue on... your buttons. Not like that. Put the glue on first. Like this. Put the glue on like that. Is that gonna stick, Biya? Is that button gonna stick? No.
T: ((Gets upset with boy in yellow.)) No, I'm not holding nothing.
((Crying off camera)) T: Who did that? Stop it. Why did you do that? Why did you do it? Come here. But you ain't got nobody to throw any toys at.... You want someone to throw it at you? Hah? Kristin.
((Another group of children sits down at the table.))
T: Put it right here. Sit here.
T: See this? This is what we gonna do. This is Corduroy. Now what we gonna do, we gonna...
((Other teacher interrupts to say something to this teacher))
T: Okay we gonna do, um, we gonna do our own Corduroy.
T: I want you all to pick out, um, a marker, right, and I want you all to make your eyes and your nose, okay, and your mouth.
T: What I want you all to do, make your eyes, your nose, and your mouth.
T: What did I just say? Make your eyes like this. Make your eyes, nose, and mouth.
T: I said make your eyes, nose, and mouth, I didn't say nothing about coloring.
T: Make your eyes, nose, and mouth. What's on your face? You have eyes, nose, and mouth. Make your eyes, nose, and mouth.
((Some time later))
((Children are sitting on the rug with books—teacher walks over and starts a song on the CD player without saying anything. Children stand up, put their books away.))
T: ((has flat affect, starts singing along to music)) Good morning to my friends, good morning to my teacher too. I'm gonna have a great day, I'll start it off with a great big smile. ((Teacher makes an exaggerated smile, then face falls flat again.))
((Teacher goes in and out singing, turns her back to group, as she rearranges the space, looking away---fixes a paper on the wall, straightens the easel. Children participant half-heartedly. No eye contact between teacher and children or among peers.))
((Song ends.))
Child: Yay! ((Teacher looks at him with a flat expression, then walks away.))
Second song comes on, teacher dances around, but doesn't make any physical contact or eye contact with children. She leaves the circle again—goes off camera while song continues.

**Description.** Background: The teacher has set out an art activity based on the book Corduroy (about a teddy bear who loses one of the buttons from his overalls). The

teacher has made cut-outs of the teddy bear and overalls for each child. During the activity, the children are supposed to put the overalls on the teddy bear (folding the straps over the bear cut-out), glue on the overalls, and then glue on two buttons. The overall straps were not cut properly ahead of time, so they do not fit over the teddy bear's head.

In the first part of the video, the teacher works at the art table with groups of children. When one group of children finish, another group comes to the table. When the first group of children sits down at the table, the teacher quickly explains what the children are expected to do ("Pick up a marker and make your eyes and nose and mouth"). The children struggle to get the overalls on their teddy bears, so the teacher has to take each one to make it fit. This means there's a lot of waiting for each child. Children respond by either disengaging or trying to move ahead to the next task. The teacher regularly reprimands children for failing to meet her expectations ("Will you leave it? 'Cause look what you're doing." "Is that gonna stick, Biya? Is that button gonna stick? No").

On a couple occasions, children from off camera signal they need help. At one point, a child begins crying, to which the teacher responds, "Who did that? Stop it. Why did you do that? Why did you do it? Come here. But you ain't got nobody to throw any toys at.... You want someone to throw it at you? Hah? Kristin." Another time, a child approaches the teacher for help, and the teacher quickly replies, "No, I'm busy."

In the second part of the video, children are seated on the carpet, independently reading books. The teacher approaches without saying anything and turns on the CD

player. When a song starts playing, children get up and put their books back on the shelf. The teacher begins singing along to the music with a flat expression on her face, although she offers an exaggerated smile when she sings “I’m going to have a great day; I’ll start it off with a great big smile.”

When children have put their books away, they stand on the carpet—some sway or dance slightly to the music, most just stand there. There is no eye contact between the teacher and children. When the song gets to “I’m going to have a great day; I’ll start it off with a hand shake,” the teacher shakes a few of the children’s hands. No eye contact is made. One child does not offer his hand when the teacher extends hers—the teacher grabs the child’s hand and shakes it.

When the song ends, one child shouts out “Yay!” and bounces up and down. The teacher glances at him briefly before walking off camera.

**Analysis.** This teacher does not appear to enjoy her time with children in this video clip. Her affect is flat or negative throughout the video. Children appear subdued and unhappy—there are no laughs, smiles, or expressions of enthusiasm (with one exception in the second half of the video). There are no signs of a personal connection between teacher and children. While the teacher occasionally refers to children by name, it’s typically to issue a reprimand: “You need to look at what you’re doing, Joey.” “Pick a marker, Karina ((irritated)).”

The teacher is easily angered when the children don’t meet her expectations for following directions and attending to the task: “What did I just say? Make your eyes like

this. Make your eyes, nose, and mouth.” “I said make your eyes, nose, and mouth, I didn’t say nothing about coloring.” “I didn’t tell you to glue nothing, did I? Did I say do that? I said wait, listen, okay?” “You didn’t finish. Look at this. I said two. Not three. Two.” Her expression consistently shows negativity, her voice is harsh, and her actions are abrupt (yanking a child’s arm back, shaking a child’s hand). There are no signs of verbal or physical affection.

The teacher maintains tight control over the art activity. When children fail to meet her rigid expectations, the teacher takes over their tasks instead of helping the children continue with assistance. There is no flexibility—the children must perform rote actions in the sequence the teacher has laid out—when they do not, the teacher takes over the tasks for them. It’s clear that the objective of this activity is for children to complete “Corduroy”—one can imagine that the goal is for children to take home “what they have made,” to create the illusion that they have been participating in fun activities at school. The teacher’s interactions suggest that the goal of the activity has little to do with the children’s enjoyment and/or opportunity to be creative.

There is no evidence that the teacher values children’s feelings, ideas, or points of view. Throughout the art activity, there are several times when children indicate they need help or support. Several of the children at the table become disengaged—the teacher responds to them with harsh rebukes rather than acknowledging their feelings or helping them become more engaged.

When a dispute breaks out off camera, the teacher responds with a series of directives and questions: “Who did that? Stop it. Why did you do that? Why did you do it? Come here. But you ain’t got nobody to throw any toys at. . . . You want someone to throw it at you? Hah?” This is one of the few times the teacher asks children questions, but it’s clear they are rhetorical, since the teacher does not allow time for the child to answer.

In the second half of the video, children are sitting quietly on the carpet, looking at books. Without acknowledging the children or letting them know it’s time for a transition, the teacher starts a song on the CD player, making it clear that this classroom is supposed to run automatically (and in fact, children put their books away, making it clear they know what to do). The irony of this situation is striking—the song that plays is upbeat, with a voice jauntily singing, “Good morning to my friends; good morning to my teacher too. I’m gonna have a great day!” Yet, there are no expressions of enthusiasm or connection on the part of the teacher or children. When one boy does make a positive comment (“Yay!”) the teacher glances at him with a flat expression before walking away.

**Discussion.** There are no signs of caring or respect in this video sampling from this classroom. The teacher spends little time paying attention to children—there is virtually no eye contact, and when children make a bid for attention, the teacher is consistently dismissive (“No. I ain’t holdin’ nothin’.” “No, I’m busy”). The teacher’s affect and tone of voice are typically negative. Her interactions with children consist of direct orders (“Pick up the buttons.” “Make the mouth.” “Sit here”) without any caring or

polite language (such as please, thank you, or a mitigating tone of voice that might convey gentleness, warmth, or a request rather than an order).

The teacher shows no interest in the children's thoughts, feelings, or experiences. When children struggle with a task at the art table, the teacher takes their work and completes it for them, making it clear that the finished product is more valuable than the child's experience. She humiliates children by reprimanding them for failing to understand her instructions. When a boy calls out with enthusiasm at the end of the song, the teacher glances at him with a flat expression before walking away.

From a Kantian perspective, there's no indication that the teacher has respect for children. The children are given no freedom to complete the art activity at their own pace or following their own sequence of steps—the teacher expects them to execute each task in the order that she has laid out. The teacher appears to vacillate in her estimation of whether the children are in control of their actions. When they fail to comply with her expectations, she typically grabs the materials from their hands and completes the task herself, suggesting that she thinks they are incapable of doing so. On the other hand, the teacher's irritation seems to stem from the assumption that the children are *more* capable than they are, that they possess the fine motor skills of an adult, that they are capable of remembering a string of instructions. In other words, the teacher does not seem to have a grasp of developmentally-appropriate practice. Her expectations either exceed or underestimate the children's capabilities. From the perspective of the ethic of care, the teacher has certainly failed to show any genuine interest or focused attention on the

children, and has made no observable attempt to understand the needs, wishes, or reality that the children are experiencing.

Another essential element in a caring interaction, according to Noddings, is whether the cared-for receives the one-caring positively and with openness. In this classroom clip, the children look bored at best and generally morose. Noddings writes, “When the attitude of the one-caring bespeaks caring, the cared-for glows, grows stronger, and feels not so much that he has been given something as that something has been added to him” (1984, p. 20). In this classroom, the children seem beaten down. It is likely that this attitude reflects an environment and a relationship with the teacher that is consistently—day in and day out—degrading, harsh, and devoid of caring and respect.

### Clip 5: Cheating in a Card Game

Transcription
T: Okay, what we’re going to do today is play a game of More.
T: Okay, how do we play the game of More?
T: I’ll give everyone ((teacher points to all three children))... ((inaudible—something about distributing the cards, and the teacher mimes dealing out cards))... I’ll give everyone cards.
T: Once we get the cards, ((inaudible)).... The highest will say “More.”
T: We gotta practice here, Emily and I ((T gives Emily some cards))
T: I’ll give Emily some cards, ((inaudible))
T: Stack them right there, Emily. And I put out a card, you put out a card ((Emily turns card over and puts it on table in front of her)).
T: I have ((inaudible))... More! Cause my number’s the highest ((T takes both cards)). Now turn it over like this. ((inaudible))
((T turns over another card and puts it in middle of table, Emily turns over a card and puts it next to T’s.))
T: More! ((T takes both cards))
((T and Emily turn over cards))
T: What is the highest number? 7 or 9? Which one is more?
((Emily points to one of the cards; another child says 9))
T: Say it. Which one of the cards...

Emily: 9.
T: ((inaudible)) ---the 9, so I say More! ((T takes both cards))
T: I'll take the cards and let's start again ((T and Emily both turn over cards)).
T: Which one is more, 6 or 7?
((Emily points to one of the cards))
T: 7 is more. So you say, what do you say?
Emily: More.
T: More! You take the set.
T: Now I'm gonna practice with Anissa; I'm gonna practice with Katherine ((T puts cards in front of Anissa and Katherine))
((Video of T practicing with other children cut))
((T and children are playing cards))
T: 3 ((as she lays down her own card)). Queen ((as Katherine turns over her card)) Which one has more?
((Emily points to Katherine))
T: Katherine ((nodding)). So say, "More."
((Can't tell if Katherine says anything))
T: How do you know it's more?
((Emily answers, inaudible))
T: Yeah. How do you know that the queen wins instead of the 3?
((Emily answers, inaudible))
T: Right. So queen is more than the 3? ((looks to Emily for confirmation))
((Emily nods))
T: That's right. See, she knows when to say, "More."
T: So now you got to... ((inaudible))
T: Everyone know how to play this game?
((Children nod and say "Yeah."))
T: So I'm going to take, collect all the cards and I'm going to redistribute them to everyone.
T: ((inaudible))... More.
T: How many cards do we have?
T: Six ((deals out cards to each player)).
T: No, take half. Here, set it right here ((not sure I heard this correctly—but T is having Anissa cut the deck))
T: Shuffling the cards.
T: ((inaudible))
T: See, I shuffle the cards so we won't keep getting the same cards.
T: Do you know what I ((inaudible)) like this?
T: ((inaudible))... too big to hold in my hand.
T: Why do you ((inaudible))
Emily: 'Cause there are a lot of cards.
T: There are a lot of cards, but if I don't change the order, it means we might keep getting the same cards. We don't want to do that, do we?



((Children shake their heads, say “No.”))
T: Because ((parts inaudible)) someone gets the same cards... win all the time... that person will win all the time and won’t give us a chance to win.
T: So now I’m going to ((inaudible)) the cards. ((T begins dealing cards))
((Teacher and children get their decks ready to play))
T: ((inaudible)) ...right?
((Child in middle taps her cards on the table, smiling))
T: ((inaudible)) ...hands so small... it’s difficult for me to do it.... so that’s a good way to shuffle.
T: Okay, who’s going to begin the game? Let’s go!
C: ((inaudible)) points to her right, smiling; child on left is smiling too))
T: ((inaudible))...okay, we’re ready ((inaudible)).
T: ((points to child on right)) You go first. Come on, let’s go. ((Teacher rubs her hands together))
((Child in middle laughs))
((Child on right turns a card over)) T: King!
((Child in middle turns over a card.)) T: Jack!
((Child on left turns a card over)) T: Queen!
((Teacher turns card over)) T: Joker!
((Teacher collects all the cards in the middle)) T: More!
((Child on left laughs; teacher laughs))
T: ((inaudible)) ... turn face up.
T: Go ahead Katherine, you begin.
((Girl on right turns card over)) T: Seven!
((Teacher turns card over)) Eight!
((Girl in middle turns her card over)) Same girl says “Seven!”
((Girl on left is looking through her cards which are face up; she is smiling))
((Teacher looks at the girl on the left))
T: ((to girl on left)) You’re cheating!
((Girl turns to teacher and smiles at her, then laughs))
((The other two children watch, both with flat affect))
T: ((inaudible))
((Girl on left turns card over))
T: ((inaudible))... a queen!
((Girl on left continues to laugh))
((Teacher reaches forward, maybe pulling back the card the girl just threw down?))
T: ((with calm, pleasant voice)) Why did you do it that way? Why did you look through your stack? Can you explain to me ((inaudible))?
((Child on left continues to smile, doesn’t say anything. Other two girls continue to watch))
T: You went through your stack to get a queen. How did you know... why didn’t you throw a 3 down there? Why did you choose a queen?
((Girl on left continues to smile, her eyes cast downward at the table, doesn’t say

anything; other two girls continue to watch, not smiling))
T: ((to other two girls)) Why do you think she put the queen down there?
Child in the middle: Because, she wants to win ((inaudible))
T: Because she wants to win, win, win, and we know the queen is what?
Child in middle: Bigger to the 7.
T: The queen is bigger to the 7. The queen's value is more than the 7.
T: So that's why you chose... was that fair what you ((she?)) did?
((Child on left continues to smile with downcast eyes, child in middle shakes her head))
T: No, 'cause we didn't look at our stack. We turned our stacks over.
T: ((inaudible))
T: She went through her stack, but that's good thinking. But it's not fair!
T: So let's go. ((turns card over)) T: Six.
((Child in middle turns her card over)) T: Eight.
((Child on right turns her card over)) T: Three.
((Child on left turns her card over))
((Teacher points to card; inaudible))
T: Who wins?
((Child in middle and child on right both raise their hands))
T: ((points to child in middle)) You win.
((Teacher claps; child in middle collects cards from the middle))
((Teacher turns over a card))
T: Kay, I'm gonna give... I'm gonna give Katherine a...
T: Eight.
((child in middle turns over a card)) T: Eight.
((Child on left looks at her card))
((Child in middle turns over her card)) T: King.
((Child on left turns over the card that she'd looked at)) T: Eight.
((Katherine, girl on right holds her card up as if she's about ready to throw it))

**Description.** In this video, a teacher and three children are sitting at a table. The teacher has a stack of cards and says that today they are going to play a game called “More!” She explains that she’ll give each person cards, and when they turn cards over, the person who has the highest card says “More!” and wins the hand. Then she says they’re going to practice, and she gives half the cards to one of the children, keeping the other half for herself. The other two children watch as the child (Emily) and the teacher each turn over a card. The teacher says “More!” and takes the two cards, saying, “Cause

my number's the highest." The teacher deals a few more practice hands with the children, asking them to determine which card is higher, and prompting the winner to say "More." She gives each child a turn to practice before collecting all the cards and shuffling them. The teacher explains that she's shuffling the cards to mix up the order, so that they won't get the same cards when she deals again, because if "someone gets the same cards... that person will win all the time and won't give us a chance to win." The teacher uses a warm, calm, voice, and she and the children make eye contact with one another, frequently smiling or laughing.

After the teacher wins the first hand, one of the children begins looking through her cards (face up) before it is her turn to play. The teacher notices and exclaims, "You're cheating!" as the child throws down a queen (beating the other cards). In response to the teacher's (friendly) accusation, the child smiles and then laughs. The other two girls watch the interaction with flat affect.

The teacher reaches for the card the child has played and asks, "Why did you do it that way? Why did you look through your stack? Can you explain to me...?" The child doesn't say anything, continuing to smile, and the teacher continues, "You went through your stack to get a queen. How did you know... why didn't you throw a three down there? Why did you choose a queen?" The child continues to smile with her eyes cast downward (not meeting the teacher's gaze), while the other two children look on with serious expressions.

The teacher then asks the other two children why the girl played the queen, and another child promptly answers, “Because she wants to win.” The teacher pushes the children to explain that the queen’s value was higher than the other cards, then asks, “So that’s why you chose... was that fair what you did?” The “cheating child” continues to smile with her eyes averted, but the other children shake their heads in answer to the teacher’s question. The teacher says, “No, ‘cause we didn’t look at our stack. We turned our stacks over. She went through her stack, but that’s good thinking. But it’s not fair!” The group then resumes playing.

**Analysis.** At the beginning of the video, the teacher and children are sitting in close proximity to one another at the table. When the teacher explains the game and starts a practice round, the children pay attention (they listen and watch what is happening). The children are almost spectators here, watching and listening as the teacher talks and plays the game, effectively by herself. The child who is involved in the practice play smiles, appearing to enjoy the activity, but the other two children watch, looking relatively disengaged.

As the activity continues, the teacher begins to invite the children to participate more in the game and in the conversation. The children react in a positive manner by smiling, responding verbally to the teacher’s prompts, and enthusiastically throwing their cards. The instructional goal of the activity appears to be comparing the value of the cards and determining which is greater. The children seem less interested in this goal than winning—at times, their expressions look impatient when the teacher takes a break in the

game to ask questions (“How do you know that the queen wins instead of the three?”), and their faces break out into big smiles when they win a hand.

In the second half of the video, the motive to win overtakes one child, and she begins looking through her cards before she plays. When the teacher calls her on it (“You’re cheating!”) the child looks abashed—still smiling, but unable to meet the teacher’s direct gaze, and unwilling to answer the teacher’s questions about why she looked at her card before playing. The child’s behavior suggests that she knows she has done something wrong, as does the reaction of the other two children—they look on with serious expressions. The teacher separates the incident into two dimensions, 1. The child cheated, and 2. The child knew that a higher card would win the hand. The teacher praises the latter (“That’s good thinking!”) while pointing to the injustice of the former (“But it’s not fair!”). But how clear is the message she intends to convey? The teacher seems to be concerned with three issues: 1. Pointing out that the child met the intended learning outcome (understanding that one card had higher value than another), 2. Making it clear that cheating is not fair, and 3. Avoiding casting shame upon the child who has cheated. These aims, particularly 2 and 3, may be conflicting. Is it possible to publicly evaluate the fairness of a child’s actions without causing humiliation or shame?

**Discussion.** The teacher’s behaviors in this video show some clear signs of caring and respect. Her voice is warm and calm—even when she discovers the child next to her is peeking at her cards, the teacher’s ejaculation “You’re cheating!” is more an exclamation of surprise than an accusation—her voice remains warm, and her comment is quickly followed by a sincere-sounding question: “Why did you do it that way?” It

soon becomes clear that the teacher is more interested in understanding the child's motive for cheating than punishing her. Despite the girl's wrongful act, the teacher assumes the child must have had a good reason for acting as she did, and actively seeks out this explanation. As Kant scholar Korsgard (1996) points out, Kant's concept of respect for persons tells us that "Even in a case where someone evidently is wrong or mistaken, we ought to suppose he must have what he takes to be good reasons for what he believes or what he does" (p. 141). And for Noddings' ethic of care (1984), the one-caring must "try to apprehend the reality of the other" (p. 14).

In one sense, then, the teacher has shown caring and generosity (in attributing motive) toward the cheating child. But what of the other two children seated at the table, playing the game? The teacher includes them in the interaction only after the erring girl refuses to explain why she has looked at her cards. By giving the other two girls the opportunity to think about why their peer acted as she did ("Why do you think she put the queen down there?"), the teacher provides them with the opportunity to reason (to connect the girl's actions with her motives) as well as to empathize—to try to understand why she broke the rules. The teacher's reaction to the cheating incident suggests that she was concerned with both caring and respect—but her response could have been taken further to enhance these moral dimensions of the interaction. For example, the teacher might have asked the cheating girl to empathize with the other two girls—to understand how they might have felt when the child took an unfair advantage in order to win. The teacher might also have explored the nature of competition itself, and the feelings and actions it inspires.

## Clip 6: Rules in the Kitchen Center

Transcription
((Teacher and children are in dramatic play area. There are four girls in the center.))
((Teacher is talking with girls (inaudible). Teacher takes off the construction hat he is wearing and hands it to one of the girls.))
((Boy enters the center from the left. He looks around at what is going on for a minute, then turns around and starts playing with something on his own (a pretend stove, maybe?))
((Teacher continues to interact with girls and hands them items—most of the conversation is inaudible))
((Teacher smiles at girl.))
T: Here, Sophia. That goes in the refrigerator.
((Teacher looks up at boy))
T: Richard—((boy turns around to look at teacher))
T: ((Using calm voice)) You are not allowed in this center; there are already four children, okay? Please find something else to do.
Girl: ((begins counting the number of children in the center.)) No... there's one, two, three, four... ((inaudible)).
((Boy leaves center))
((Boy comes back into camera view near teacher. Teacher reaches for boy and puts him on his lap, speaks to him quietly (inaudible). Boy gets up and walks over to another center behind teacher, looks down at the (blocks, legos??)).
((Teacher interacts with girls, offering them items such as a bowl.))
((A girl, not one of the ones already in the center, comes up behind the teacher and crawls into his lap.))
((Teacher reaches his arm around the girl and allows her to sit in his lap, while he continues to talk with the other girls. There are now five children in the center.))
((One girl gently puts a blue object on the teacher's head, pretending it is a comb, and starts to "brush" his hair.))
T: ((looks up at girl)) Brushing my hair again? Thank you.
((Teacher looks down at the girl in his lap and says something inaudible.))
((Teacher reaches for a plastic lemon and hands it to the girl in his lap.))
T: Oh, here you go. A lemon.
((The girl takes the lemon and pretends to chew on it while the teacher makes exaggerated chewing sounds.))

**Description.** In this video, the teacher is in the kitchen/dramatic play center with four girls. He (the teacher) sits in a chair while the girls play around him. The teacher and children frequently exchange items and appear to be comfortable with each other, as

evidenced by close proximity, smiles, and warm tones of voice. When a boy enters the center and begins playing with something on his own, the teacher quickly says to the child in a calm voice, “You are not allowed in this center; there are already four children, okay? Please find something else to do.” A girl nearby appears to disagree with the teacher’s assessment, saying, “No, there’s one, two, three, four...” as she counts the number of children in the center.

As the boy leaves the area, the teacher pulls him into his lap and speaks to him quietly. The teacher’s voice is inaudible and the boy’s face is away from the camera, but the teacher and child have neutral (not negative) facial expressions, and the boy appears comfortable in the teacher’s lap. After the teacher finishes talking to the boy, the child gets up and walks to another center behind the teacher, his affect still neutral. He then appears to become engaged with the objects (legos or blocks) in the new area.

Shortly thereafter, a girl approaches the kitchen center and crawls into the teacher’s lap. The teacher puts his arm around the girl and allows her to stay in his lap, although there are still four other children in the center. Another girl approaches the teacher and gently puts a blue objects on the teacher’s head, pretending to comb his hair. The teacher comments, “Brushing my hair again? Thank you.” The teacher looks down at the girl in his lap and hands her a plastic lemon as he says, “Oh, here you go, a lemon.” The child takes the lemon and pretends to chew on it.

**Analysis.** The teacher and children appear to be enjoying their time together in the kitchen/dramatic play center. The four girls actively interact by picking up multiple



objects, bringing items to the table, and playing with the stove, crib, and refrigerator. Children in the center have the freedom to pursue their own interests while the teacher makes comments such as “That goes in the refrigerator” and “Brushing my hair again? Thank you.”

The teacher enforces a classroom rule when the boy enters the center: “You are not allowed in this center; there are already four children, okay? Please find something else to do.” The boy complies with the expectation by leaving the area, but a moment later, reappears. It is unclear whether he is trying to re-enter the center or is just walking by, but the teacher pulls him into his lap and speaks to him quietly. Since the boy walks to another center afterwards, the teacher presumably has reminded him that he must find another place to play. While the boy doesn’t pull away while he is in the teacher’s lap, there are no signs of closeness on the part of either child or teacher—no smiles, eye contact, or physical affection.

When another girl enters the center a few moments later, the teacher allows her to crawl in his lap and stay, even though there are now five children in the area, a violation of the rule the teacher has just stated to the boy. It is not clear why the rule is not applied equally to this child, although it is apparent that she and the teacher have a warm relationship (he wraps his arm around her, they look at one another and smile, and when he hands her a plastic lemon, they engage in pretend play around the lemon). While it’s tempting to hypothesize about the reasons why the rule was enforced with the boy but not the girl (perhaps there was only room for one “man of the house,” or the teacher was making a display of favoritism), there’s no way of knowing without additional

information. But several important questions arise from this example: what do children learn about justice from differentiated (and unexplained) applications of classroom rules? How do teachers' emotional responses to children impact their teaching and abilities to be caring and respectful to each child? How are boys and girls treated differently in the classroom?

**Discussion.** There are some indications of caring and respect in this classroom sample. The teacher speaks in a warm, calm tone, even when he is redirecting a child. By playing along with the children in the kitchen center (for example, by allowing a child to comb his hair and thanking her for doing so), the teacher shows that he is paying attention to the children and values their experiences.

In Kantian terms, the teacher shows some signs that he respects the children. For the most part, he allows them to pursue their own ends—choosing their own activities within the kitchen center. When the boy enters the center, the teacher not only states the rule clearly (“You are not allowed in this center”) but also provides a rationale (“There are already four children”), which encourages the child to connect the behavioral expectation with clear reasons for the rule. According to Kant’s categorical imperative (see Chapter 3), the moral worth of the rule may be determined by whether it is universally applied—that is, the children should follow this rule in every similar circumstance. However, the teacher fails to apply the rule consistently—when another child (a girl) enters the center, he allows her to stay even though the maximum number of children now exceeds the limit. It becomes clear then, that this expectation is *not* a universal rule—it applies to the boy, but not to the girl. Why? There is no evidence from

the video that satisfies this question, but the teacher's response to the girl provides some possibilities. When the girl approaches the center, she crawls directly into the teacher's lap. Perhaps this direct appeal to their personal relationship makes the teacher forget about the rule, or decide that the rule doesn't apply to the girl because she is sitting in his lap rather than taking up her own floor space.

Since it is impossible for this researcher to see a clear rationale for the teacher's inconsistent application of the rule, though, it's unlikely that the children are able to see one. What if the boy were to observe that the girl has been allowed to enter after he was denied? It might well serve to undermine the boy's confidence in the fairness of classroom rules (Kant's categorical imperative), or to consider whether the teacher simply doesn't care for him (Noddings' ethics of care).

### **Summary of Findings**

These video samples demonstrate that caring and respect for persons as defined in this study are limited, in the observable behaviors of the early childhood teachers. In all of the videos, the children are largely spectators—equivalent to adults attending an “interactive” performance in which they are invited to participate briefly and sporadically only at the direction of the performers. Activities are centered on the teacher; children are outsiders looking in, watching the teacher perform. The locus of attention and authority in these videos, without exception, is always the teacher, not the children. The teachers make and enforce classroom rules unilaterally—adjudicating conflicts without (or with minimal) participation. Teachers do not engage children in conversation (beyond limited

close-ended question and answer exchanges), to ask meaningful questions, or to elicit their thoughts and feelings.

And yet, although limited, we do see occasional signs of caring and respect. In some of the classroom samples, teachers allow children to make decisions such as voting on an upcoming activity or choosing their own play during center time. One teacher shows sensitivity to a child who has been caught cheating, while another welcomes a child into his lap. A limitation of this study is that rich, contextual information isn't available—further inquiry that puts this type of research—linking normative theories of caring and respect with empirical findings in classrooms—into school contexts, community contexts, and ethnic and socioeconomic contexts would be valuable. What these findings do point to the need for more ethically-oriented education on caring and respect in early childhood teacher training programs. I'll explore these and other limitations and implications from these findings in the final chapter.

## CHAPTER 5

### DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

#### **Summary of Study**

This study has connected ethical theory (normative inquiry) with a qualitative (empirical) analysis of how the principles of caring and respect for persons do and do not manifest in pre-K classrooms. The research questions that were posed are: theoretically, what are caring and respect? And empirically, what teacher behaviors are associated with treating others with caring and respect? I began by defining caring and respect for persons based on the theoretical work of Kant and Noddings. Based on their theories, I argued that: 1) caring and respect are moral principles that have innate worth (Kant, 1785/1993; Noddings, 1984); 2) respect for persons entails treating all person as ends in themselves (Kant, 1785/1993); 3) caring and respect are both grounded in the philosophical assumption that others are in control of their actions and have good reasons for acting as they do (Kant, 1785/1993; Noddings, 1984); 4) an essential part of respect is the obligation to help others further develop their capacity to reason (Kant, 1785/1993); and 5) cultivating feelings and inclinations toward caring serves as a building block to the attainment of ethical duty (Kant, 1785/1993; Noddings, 1984).

I then applied these normative concepts to an empirical analysis of teacher-child interactions in six early childhood classrooms. The concepts were used to create a rubric for the observational analysis of the ethical climate of these classrooms with a focus on caring and respect for persons. The videos were first described and then analyzed using established principles of video analysis (Goldman and McDermott, 2007; Pianta et al,

2008). The study found that caring and respect for persons were either not demonstrated or were demonstrated in very limited ways in the observable behaviors of teachers in the samples of preschool classrooms under examination. While Chapter 4 discussed each video vignette in connection with broader themes of caring and respect for persons, this final chapter will explore overarching themes from the collective analyses, limitations of the study, and implications for research, policy, and practice.

### **Analysis of Findings**

The classrooms used as the body of data for this study are representative of typical U.S. preschools—they are both private and publicly funded, teachers and children are demographically diverse (race, class, gender), and the snapshots of interactions taken through selected video clips are neither the best nor the worst in terms of caring and respect for persons. All six clips focus on group interactions—one or two teachers with groups of children, ranging from five to roughly 16-20 in number. I know, from watching thousands of hours of preschool classroom footage, that some of the most special moments between teachers and children happen during 1:1 exchanges. I've seen dozens of examples of teachers demonstrating exemplary caring and respect: a teacher sensitively comforting a child who misses her mother (the teacher acknowledged the child's feelings, comforted her, then helped her get engaged in making a card for her mom to let her know how much she loved her), a teacher taking the time to mediate a conflict between two children in a way that enabled both to understand the feelings and motives of the other, rather than quickly adjudicating the dispute, a teacher listening to a child's wildly silly story in a way that demonstrated genuine interest and treated the child

with dignity. But these types of interactions require a class size ratio that does not match the standard (or even exemplary) preschool classrooms in our society. Why do we imagine that teachers can form caring and respectful relationships with children when they have several (and on average, teacher-child ratios in preschools exceed 1:10) children in their care? Of course, there is no universal answer as to the “perfect” teacher-child ratio—in Japan, Tobin et al (2009) found that preschool classrooms typically have a teacher-child ratio of 1:25 or 1:30, and Japanese educators believe that anything less than 1:17 is too low (pp. 120, 129). A ratio of this size makes sense in a culture that prioritizes the values of “children’s peer relations, learning to do things as a group, and self-sufficiency in changing clothes and organizing belongings” (Tobin et al, 2009, p. 129). But if preschools in the United States place a priority on caring and respect for persons as defined in this study, as I believe they should, then we need to have a serious discussion about whether teachers are able to form the kind of close relationships with children, those that mirror in many ways the regard of a mother for her child, that Noddings (1984) argues is essential for the ethic of care to develop to its fullest capacity (p. 31).

This study explored the ways in which caring and respect are made manifest in preschool classrooms. While immersed in my data analysis, I frequently imagined myself as one of the children depicted in the six clips. In classrooms showing few signs of caring and respect, I was horrified thinking of myself placed in that situation. Picture yourself taking a university-level course, sitting in the back of the room, having a difficult day, and finding yourself in tears. Can you imagine the teacher pointing you out to the rest of the class, chastising you for crying, and then celebrating when you’re forced to speak up?

And yet, this is the type of interaction that many children experience every day. Why is it that we think that these kinds of experiences, so anathema to those we would accept as autonomous adults, are acceptable to force upon young children?

Lavaque-Manty, a Kant scholar at the University of Michigan, argues that having autonomy consists of two parts: the capacity to think rationally and act accordingly, and the recognition from others that one is autonomous—what Lavaque-Manty refers to as ascriptive autonomy (2006, p. 369). In some of the clips examined in this study, we see evidence that some preschool teachers provide children limited opportunities to be autonomous—to make their own choices, to contribute to their own ends. Yet, our society holds a paternalistic view of children, an idea that young people are incapable of rational thought, are lacking in dignity, and do not deserve to be treated as we would like to be treated ourselves. Contemporary American views on early childhood education come closer to embracing caring, yet the ethic of care as Noddings (1984, 2005) conceptualizes it goes far beyond providing a warm and nurturing environment: it entails getting to know children, treating them with dignity, trying to understand their reality and motives for acting, and helping children learn to think (reason) for themselves.

According to Noddings (2006), the “central focus of the ethics of care is on the compelling moral salience of attending to and meeting the needs of the particular other for whom we take responsibility” (p. 10). These needs include (but are not necessarily limited to) both the emotional and the intellectual dimensions of care, which are often interrelated. In viewing the interactions between pre-school teachers and children, it was clear that at times, neither need was being met. What was missing? For Noddings (2006),



“such emotions as sympathy, empathy, sensitivity, and responsiveness are seen as the kind of emotions that need to be cultivated” in the one-caring (p. 10). Although the video analysis was not able to indicate the degree to which the early childhood educators observed exhibited these emotional strengths overall, it was nevertheless suggestive that at certain times (and for whatever reasons) the teachers were interacting with children in a manner that was not indicative of the kind of caring that children need.

Likewise, Noddings (1984) writes that in “the intellectual domain, our caring represents a quest for understanding. When we understand, we feel that this object-other has responded to us” (p. 169). Again, the video analysis revealed that, at times, the early childhood educators were not adequately attending to the intellectual needs of the children—as when the teacher took charge of the art project instead of helping children understand how to complete the lesson. In both cases, in what we may assume would provide an opportunity for caring, teachers fell short in their ethical responsibilities to their children. These issues will be addressed in subsequent sections.

### **Limitations and Implications for Further Research**

The limitations of this study and the use of pre-recorded video segments did not allow for the kind of in-depth, fully contextualized analyses that further research would provide (Goldman and McDermott, 2007). According to Goldman and McDermott (2007), “video records taken a face value encourage mundane opinions and biases, what we call ‘of course’ analyses... leaving undisturbed the problematic categories” (p. 102). In order to provide for deeper analysis and richer contextualization, Goldman and McDermott (2007) recommend three approaches to video analysis: reform, interactional,

and historical. They define reform analysis as “video analyses directed at educational reform” (p. 102), and it may be limited to video analysis of specific interactions between study participants in order to challenge established educational assumptions. Interactional analysis is more comprehensive and aims to capture the “complex web of connections,” that occur over the span of an entire school day, week, month, or even year (p. 110). Historical analysis places interactional and reform analyses into a larger socio-political context which raises fundamental questions about class, race, gender, and so on, in order to better understand and critique the ways in which “schools deliver success in accord with the established order” (p. 111).

A primary limitation of this study is that it only uses reform analysis. Using this method, this study identified in a very concrete way that the observed classroom samples showed limited examples of caring and respect for persons. “Video ethnographies of classrooms show the moment-to-moment lives of tiny selves in exploration and confrontation with social structure” (Goldman and McDermott, 2007, p. 112). My video analysis allowed me to do the former, but not the latter. I was able to capture “patterns of engagement not visible to participant-observers” (Goldman and McDermott, 2007, p. 110), and to problematize situations and interactions that might otherwise go unnoticed. However, the presence of caring and respect for persons in these classrooms was neither fully confirmed nor fully disconfirmed; instead, the analysis illuminated areas of potentially problematic behavior that may be addressed by changes in the way we train early childhood educators and structure early childhood classrooms.

### **Implications for Early Childhood Professional Development**

As James and James (2004) point out, “More attention now is being paid to the importance of childhood as the preparatory stage for adulthood, rather than as a stage in the life course of value in its own right, and to establishing a set of predictive indicators that will reveal the contribution that children will make to society as future adults” (pp. 124-125). One only need take a look at recent federal commission reports and speeches on education to see this emphasis on the child as future citizen.

In a speech before the joint houses of Congress in 1994, President Clinton remarked, “Our Goals 2000 proposal will empower individual school districts to experiment with ideas like chartering their schools to be run by private corporations or having more public school choice, to do whatever they wish to do as long as we measure every school by one high standard: Are our children learning what they need to know to compete and win in the global economy?” (Clinton, State of the Union Address, 1994). And in 2010, Barack Obama wrote in the introduction to the *A Blueprint for Reform: The Reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act*, “We must reform our schools to accelerate student achievement, close achievement gaps, inspire our children to excel, and turn around those schools that for too many young Americans aren’t providing them with the education they need to succeed in college and a career” (U.S. Department of Education, 2010).

Uprichard (2008) characterizes this focus on children as future citizens as part of the “Being vs. Becoming” debate; that is, thinking of children as either persons in their own right, or those who will become persons: “There are two main issues with the construction of the ‘becoming’ child discourse. The first is that it is explicitly future

orientated. This necessarily places the onus of importance on that which the child will be rather than that which the child is. The child is seen as ‘a future adult’ rather than as a ‘young human being’ in his or her own right. This assumption is problematic because the temporal focus necessarily forces us to neglect or dismiss the present everyday realities of being a child” (Uprichard, 2008, p. 304). Certainly, some of the future-oriented language focuses on children as “becoming,” such as President Obama’s exhortation to provide children “with the education they need to succeed in college and a career” (U.S. Department of Education, 2010). This speaks to looking out for the interests of the children not as they are now, but what will be best for them later in life, which focuses school improvement efforts on future outcomes for children.

More alarming, however, is the rhetoric that speaks to children as instrumental, not to their future selves, but to corporate economic interests. In 1983, the National Commission on Excellence in Education’s report *A Nation at Risk* declared that “Education is an investment in ever renewable human resources that are more durable and flexible than capital plant and equipment” (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). This newly emerging view of childhood that promotes the use of business-oriented terms such as “human capital” and drives the modern reform movement that is centered on testing, evaluation, and accountability. And this push toward “school readiness” and testing has, in recent years, begun to impact the field of early childhood in ways that pose even greater threats to children as persons in their own right: “This increased interest in preschool services by nation states and international bodies is mostly of a very particular kind. It is stirred by the prospects of preschools

being sites for producing predefined outcomes, mainly through the application of technical practices to the efficient governing of children.... These outcomes are mainly concerned with the future development, educational attainment and employability of the child, in a context of increasing competition and change....” (Dahlberg and Moss, 2005, p. 4).

And yet, acknowledging children as full-fledged social persons deserving of rights carries with it some danger—Prout (2003) characterizes this as thinking about “children in danger” versus “children as dangerous” (pp. 12-13). The “children in danger” notion focuses on children’s vulnerability, dependence, and innocence, and highlights the need to safeguard children from issues such as poverty, neglect, and crime (p. 12). On the other hand, this view casts children as “objects of concern” (Hallett and Prout, 2003, p. 1) rather than as autonomous, social actors in their own right.

The “children as dangerous” representation of childhood concedes that children have some degree of autonomy and function as social persons in society; but is primarily “concerned with children as a threat to themselves, to others, and to society at large,” to which society must respond by exercising ever-increasing levels of regulation and control (Prout, 2003, p. 13). “That different kinds of control and interventions are put in place, however, reveals that children are agents, whose actions have consequences the effects of which adults might—and often do—wish to control” (James and James, 2004, p. 25). The reality is that children “are” social agents, and sometimes in ways that adults don’t want them to be. It is this type of thinking, as James et al (1998) point out, that “suggests that

the parallel trends towards increased autonomy and increased regulation are not so contradictory as they might first appear” (pp. 7-8).

It is beyond the scope of this project to tackle in great depth the most fundamental notions of childhood that ground our teaching practices. However, thinking about how we ought to treat or act toward children first requires that we have a notion of who or what children are. If we view children as distinctly different from ourselves, then we are likely to justify treating them in a way that is different from how we would like to be treated. If we view them as non-persons or persons-yet-to-be, then we are likely to think we do not need to concern ourselves with their treatment at all, except insofar as it might impact their future status as persons. If we view them as persons capable of acting in ways that might harm themselves and others but without the capacity to regulate their own behavior, then we are likely to justify heavy social controls.

To most of us, childhood is a human condition that we have all experienced and see as distinctly different from “adulthood.” Most people who live in the United States appear to believe that children are a distinct group who are to be controlled and protected, guided and encouraged to explore. Education, and especially early childhood education, is dominated by the belief that the child is a whole and separate being, relying on adults for guidance toward individual independence.... To a great extent, we have assumed that our beliefs and actions regarding them are warranted and result in benefits to them. We have created the ultimate “Other,” a group of beings not considered able or mature enough to create themselves. We have not analyzed the assumptions and beliefs that underlie our creation.... We have not discussed the possibilities that younger members of society may not all benefit from living within our constructions of “childhood.” (Cannella, 2002, p. 19)

I believe that an essential step toward treating children ethically is to stop thinking of them as distinctly “other,” as beings who exist in a fundamentally different reality

from adults. Neither, however, am I advocating that we return to a view of children as “little adults” (Ariès, 1962). A third possibility that I offer is to think of children as embarking on a journey that lasts a lifetime, persons who are varied in their capacities, talents, and interests in ways that negate the “positivist view of childhood and its expression of a universal, uniformly developmentalist conception of the normal child” (Kincheloe as cited in Soto and Swadener, 2005, p. xii). When we come to see in children an earlier reflection of ourselves, rather than some radical "other," we will begin to recognize that they are deserving of the same kind of caring and respect that we believe we deserve. Moreover, we will come to see caring and respect as part of a social process of learning and living together that does not cease when one turns eighteen or leaves school.

One important question this study raises, however, is how (or whether) Kant’s respect for persons is applicable with groups of persons deemed incapable of rational thought. Lavaque-Manty (2006) offers this compromise:

In a way, the solution is another clever Copernican revolution that Kant enacts: in Copernican revolutions, the solution is to reverse your central assumptions about the problem at hand. Think of children again. They do have to be educated, and their education is by its very nature somewhat paternalistic, but it makes all the difference in the world whether you think the children you educate are not yet capable of "thinking for themselves" at all or whether you think they can think for themselves in some way, and then tailor your approach to them for that way. (p. 387)

If we value our children and the importance of treating them with caring and respect, then we need to instigate a fundamental shift in our nation’s attitudes toward childhood. Perhaps children are not fully capable of rational thought, but neither are most

adults. Developing children's capacity to reason, to receive caring and eventually take on the position of the one-caring, requires that we as teachers treat them with the dignity and love that every human being deserves.

It should also be noted that there exists "some tension between the concept of rights and, for example, the ethics of care or the ethics of an encounter.... Rights entail a contractual and finite exchange between calculating and independent individuals; care and encounter foreground inter-dependence, infinite responsibility and the impossibility of being free of obligation" (Dahlberg and Moss, 2005, p. 30). Yet Dahlberg and Moss (2005) do not propose setting aside rights—instead, they advocate for them to be used as a tool rather than a prescription, "increasing the agency of those with less power and providing a modicum of protection against oppression' (p. 30).

The challenge issued by postmodern ethicists such as Dahlberg and Moss (2005) is to create a confluence of the rights-based and care-based arguments in early childhood practice so that children are afforded needed protections to be treated with dignity, love, and respect, without resorting to a narrow, prescriptive set of obligations that decontextualizes what this actually looks like in any given space. St Pierre (as cited in Dahlberg and Moss, 2005) argues that "if there is no absolute truth to which every instance can be compared for its truth value, if truth is instead multiple and contextual, then the call for ethical practice shifts from grand, sweeping statements about truth and justice to engagement with specific, complex problems that do not have generalizable solutions" (pp. 70-71). In other words, national standards calling for caring and respect in early childhood programs must be tempered and accompanied by genuine dialogue with



local actors—administrators, teachers, parents, and children—to determine what these ethics look like in their communities and programs.

How might these tensions be addressed in teacher education and professional development? The answers to this question will require more research and analysis, but let me suggest two general possibilities. First, early childhood teacher education and professional development can be restructured in order to include a greater emphasis on the ethics of care and the responsibilities of the one-caring. Today, early childhood educators in the U.S. tend to be paid low wages, have minimal licensing requirements, and less education than their counterparts at higher levels. All three of these issues need to be addressed, starting with the first. Why does a society which claims to put its children on a pedestal pay its early childhood educators a salary that is often considered below a living wage? In order to attract qualified individuals to the profession, and to compensate them for their years of education and their important work, early childhood educators must be paid a wage equivalent to other public school teachers. Licensure and education requirements can then (and only then) be brought up to commensurate levels. In their more robust form, education and professional development programs for early childhood educators can and should then include education pertaining to the ethical treatment of children.

Second, institutional changes may need to be made in order to provide the teachers the resources they need to maintain caring relationships with children in an environment which may, at times, be conducive to less than desirable behaviors. Smaller class sizes, more teachers and staff, more frequent breaks, more comfortable physical

environments, and increased pay—all of these measures may help improve the overall climate in which these educators work and contribute to their capacity to embrace and embody the ethic of care.

Video analysis can also be a valuable instrument for improving the quality of student-teacher interactions, and for promoting a more ethical classroom environment. The teachers themselves may not have been aware of the categories of caring and respect for persons as outlined in this study, or their presence or absence in their interactions with their children—the use of video analysis may therefore be illuminating not only to researchers, but to practitioners in a praxis community, to highlight the ways in which adults are often dismissive of children.

The CLASS measure, originally developed as a research tool (Pianta et al, 2008), has evolved to be used in just this way, to inform professional development initiatives that seek to improve teacher-child interactions in the areas of emotional support, classroom organization, and instructional support (Pianta et al, 2008).

However, the development of the CLASS tool and its associated professional development programs rests on the degree to which it is evidence-based, showing associations between changes in CLASS scores and improvements on student achievement tests (Burchinal et al, 2010; Burchinal et al, 2012; Connor et al, 2005; Curby et al, in press; Curby et al, 2009; Dobbs-Oates et al, 2011; Dominguez, et al, 2011; Dominguez et al, 2010; Downer et al, 2011; Guo et al, 2010; Howes et al, 2008; Logan et al, 2011; Maier et al, 2012; Mashburn et al, 2008; McGinty et al, 2012; Pianta et al, 2005, 2008; Vitiello et al, 2012; Vu et al, 2008), as well as its scalability. This means that

classrooms are scored according to a set of universal criteria that do not account for cultural variations in the ways teachers manifest the prescribed set of valued behaviors (Downer et al, 2012). CLASS-based professional development programs focus on teaching educators these prescribed sets of behaviors without emphasizing the need to consider how structural and contextual issues impact caring. I believe that reform aimed at improving these interactions must target the interactions of the teachers themselves through careful observations and analyses like those employed in this study, but only within a more comprehensive reform effort aimed at the conditions that impact teachers' capacity for caring and respecting themselves and others. These things can be accomplished if we broaden the scope of educational reform to emphasize the importance of connecting ethics and practice in teacher training, professional development, and educational research.

### **Final Thoughts**

In her book *Respect*, Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot (2000) offers the following reflection: "Whether defined by rules of law or habits of culture, respect often implies required expressions of esteem, approbation, or submission. By contrast, I focus on the way respect creates symmetry, empathy, and connection in all kinds of relationships, even those, such as teacher and student... commonly seen as unequal. Rather than looking for respect as a given in certain relationships, I am interested in watching it develop over time" (pp. 9-10). Like Kant (1785/1993), I believe that respect for persons is inherently good and entails treating all persons, including children, as ends in

themselves. But I also agree with John Dewey (1909) that approaches to ethics need to be brought down from on high to a more accessible place in the public sphere:

We believe in moral laws and rules to be sure, but they are in the air. They are something set off by themselves. They are so very “moral” that they have no working contact with the average affairs of every-day life. These moral principles need to be brought down to the ground through their statement in social and in psychological terms. We need to see that moral principles are not arbitrary, that they are not “transcendental”; that the term “moral” does not designate a special region or portion of life. We need to translate the moral into the conditions and forces of our community life, and into the impulses and habits of the individual. (pp. 57-58)

In order to do this, to make ethics a real and regular part of the public conversation on teaching, education policy, and adult-child relationships, I believe we need to move dialogue about caring and respect for persons from a purely academic sphere to one that every person can access. This means talking about what caring and respect for persons look like—and what they sound like, feel like, and so on—and how these notions are brought to life in the everyday relationships of teachers and children. A discussion of how we ought to act toward children is made relevant by comparing it to how children are treated in the here and now and how adults might feel if they were placed in a similar situation. This study was one step in my journey toward a vision in which all children are treated with dignity, love, and respect by the adults around them.

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APPENDIX A  
IRB APPROVAL



EXEMPTION GRANTED

Eric Margolis  
Human Communicationsunication, Hugh Downs School of  
480/965-0131  
ERIC.MARGOLIS@asu.edu

Dear Eric Margolis:

On 12/9/2013 the ASU IRB reviewed the following protocol:

Type of Review:	Initial Study
Title:	Respecting Children: Teacher Child Relationships in Early Childhood Settings
Investigator:	Eric Margolis
IRB ID:	STUDY00000381
Funding:	None
Grant Title:	None
Grant ID:	None
Documents Reviewed:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• ASU IRB_11-18-13.docx, Category: IRB Protocol;</li><li>• IRB_Protocol.NCRECE.2012-11-27.docx, Category: IRB Protocol;</li><li>• Classroom Assessment Scoring System measure.pdf, Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions /interview guides/focus group questions);</li><li>• Kate Paxton's CITI completion, Category: Non-ASU human subjects training (if taken within last 3 years to grandfather in);</li></ul>

The IRB determined that the protocol is considered exempt pursuant to Federal Regulations 45CFR46 (1) Educational settings on 12/9/2013.

In conducting this protocol you are required to follow the requirements listed in the INVESTIGATOR MANUAL (HRP-103).

Sincerely,

IRB Administrator

cc:

Kate Paxton